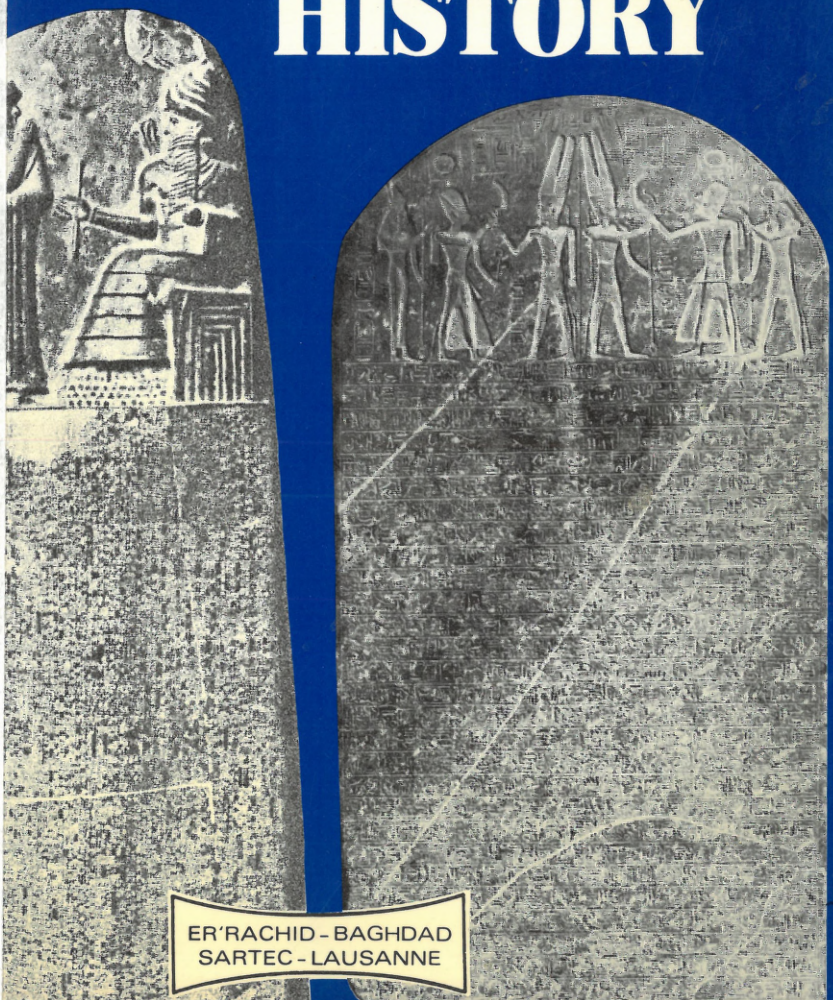
SOUSSÉ

THE ARABS AND JEWS IN HISTORY



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THE ARABS AND JEWS IN HISTORY

Ahmad Soussé

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Introductory note to the European edition

Dr. Ahmad Soussé's book which we are now publishing in a condensed form, is not a treatise on the scriptures nor a theological refutation. It is an approach to the controversial problem of the occupation of a territory on legal and prerogative grounds of which the legality can — and should — be questioned; and it is supported by a considerable amount of historical and archaeological evidence.

Although Ahmad Soussé's detailed study touches upon political matters, it is because the subject has, for a long time, been transformed into a political one. The reason for this was to justify the occupation of Palestinian territory and the despoiling of its inhabitants by the Zionists who have made use of arguments of dubious validity and made assertions — which were accepted — claimed as being gospel truths, whereas they are today refuted by the knowledge that we have acquired from archaeology, ethnography, philology, epigraphy, palaeography and all those other disciplines which have been applied to the seven thousand year old history of those regions which are considered to be the cradle of mankind.

The author has in no way attempted to refute in a spirit of scientific materialism, theses which have been sacrosanct for a long time because they dealt with theological subjects; the fact that he has done so has been

in the spirit of a believer, a lucid believer, detached both from rigid fanaticism and from the disdainful disinterest of the pseudo-intellectual. He has striven to provide a scientific basis for his arguments out of a profound wish to construct rather than to destroy; his passionate search after the truth has led him to denounce the manipulation of a legend-filled period of history with the sole aim of justifying a policy of aggression which has no basis in law.

Dr. Ahmad Soussé offers us a new interpretation of the Old Testament *which is different from that which has been traditional over a long period of time, and also the relevant food for thought provided by the quantity of documents discovered and decoded over recent decades, by the ancient tablets of the Sumerian civilisation and by the Egyptian records of Tel-el-Amarna. But we hasten to add that the author has no pretensions to being an innovator; what he has done is to synthesise what has been gradually discovered by an increasing number of scholars and theologians both Christian, Jewish and Muslim. The views put forward — or suggested — are unfamiliar only to those who adhere to an outdated past or who, for personal reasons or indifference follow the conventions of a period when the science of history was in its infancy.*

In volume eleven of the Pleiades Encyclopaedia, Historical Methodology *(1973) page 167, there is an excellent statement on the subject which reads as follows:*

"A new and different interpretation, more authentic and, historically, more valuable, has taken the place of the old monolithic vision of the Bible. We no longer look for a single narrative written once for all time by one author, in all those books of the Bible which are considered to be possible historical evidence (for as well as the Pentateuch, the examination covers not only the 'historical' books of the Bible, but also the 'prophets' and the 'didactic writings' or

'sapiential' books); rather we regard it as a collection of archives some of them covering the same period of time, expressing the different points of view of the several authors, places and centuries, and as such, are at the least, evidence of these surroundings and these moments in Israeli history."

The Pentateuch *(or* Hexateuch *if one includes the book of Joshua) is none other than the Torah which many Jews pretend to believe was written by Moses himself in the second half of the second millenium B.C. even though their own historians definitely admit that it was written very much later. S. W. Baron in his* History of Israel *(P.U.F. 1965) has written with considerable reserve:*

"One may agree in thinking that it was in these centuries (6th-4th B.C.) that a great number of the books of the Old Testament *were written. Other older ones were put into their final form at this time. Just how many of these in their existing form were entirely new or to what extent, on the other hand the legacy of earlier generations was adapted to suit the needs of the time, can only be a subject for conjecture." (Vol. 1, p. 139).*

In the introduction to their edition of the Bible, the Benedictine scholars of the Belgian abbey of Maredsous whose erudition carries much weight in the Catholic world, wrote in 1950:

"It should be realised that Moses was definitely the source of the national, religious and moral systems of the people of Israel; but one does not have to accept that he wrote the whole of the Pentateuch. *On the contrary, it is useful to see it as a progressive compilation of various documents which were gradually put together and developed according to the requirements of succeeding periods, around a primitive kernel. There is no doubt that Moses originated this work and certainly would have made use of*

even older documents; the collection did not, however, take its final form until after the Exile around the 5th century B.C."

It would be easy, but tiresome, to add further concordant quotations on this subject, but let us, nevertheless, include the words of Professor Amanouil Hanna Sim'an, an Iraqi Dominican friar who, in a radio broadcast on France-Culture *in 1976, said:*

"The Bible is not the work of the Jews and Christians alone. Judaism as a specific religion together with its institutions dates from the return from exile in the 6th century B.C. Jews and Christians are the inheritors of a cultural and spiritual search for God which took place mainly in the Mediterranean basin and particularly in the eastern end. Mesopotamia occupies a special position in this part of it. So the search for God and mankind's identity is not something disembodied. It is woven into an entire civilisation."

The notion of the 'chosen people', set apart from others from the very beginning and continuing throughout the centuries of the diaspora, *is only defended by the doctrinaires in flat contradiction with what we are learning from history and ethnography. In a UNESCO publication entitled* Racism confronted by Science, *professor Juan Comas has the following to say about the Jewish people "... its constant migrations, its relationships, voluntary or involuntary, with the most varied nations and peoples have resulted in so much cross-breeding that one finds every people's characteristics in what is known as the people of Israel." Arthur Koestler, at the end of his book* The Thirteenth Tribe *which includes a summary of the records on the Turkish kingdom of the Khazars which converted to Judaism in the 8th century A.D., writes: "The documentation contained in the previous chapters is a series of solid*

arguments in support of the modern historians — Austrian, Israeli or Polish — who, quite independently, come to the conclusion that the majority of the Jewish people at the present time is not of Palestinian but of Caucasian origin. The main point is that the Jewish migrations did not leave the Mediterranean to move eastwards, passing through France and Germany and subsequently returning westwards. They always moved westwards from the Caucasus to the Ukraine, thence to Poland and from there to central Europe."

This fundamental ethnic difference throws a particular light on the racist reactions of European Jews who are the majority in the State of Israel, towards the 'Arab' Jews who were settled in Palestine before them; these reactions are a problem for the Israeli leaders.

Preface

As I am not a history expert I do not feel that I am qualified to express an opinion on the works of Dr. Ahmad Soussé and especially on his book *The Arabs and Jews in History*. But the quality of the work is self-evident and is capable of convincing the expert as well as the non-expert; the latter can equally well appreciate its value and read it with enthusiasm.

As an ordinary reader, therefore, I must say that this book is one of the most important books written in Arabic in modern times. A book which should be read not only by Arabs but by everyone who wishes to form an honest opinion.

The book is, firstly, a remarkable account of one of the most important periods and one of the most serious problems in the history of the Arab nation, and, secondly, it is an instrument which helps us to better understand the events which have taken place; in so doing it gives a new force to our present renaissance by providing an effective weapon against those who have resorted to multiple means to falsify our history in order to weaken us and to be able to dominate us.

This book sheds a clear light on the false evidence which the Zionist movement deliberately used in order to achieve its imperialist goals. The truth concerning these historical

facts will, once it is recognised by the whole world, become a powerful weapon in our struggle against a movement which has had recourse to the falsification and exploitation of history in order to gain its aggressive aims.

Having recognised the value of this book, the Iraqi Ministry of Information is helping with its distribution, and has asked the author to prepare this summary so that the work may be made available to the greatest number of Arab and foreign readers.

Tareq Aziz
Minister of Information*
October 1977

* Vice-Prime Minister since July 1979.

PART ONE

The Arab Semites in Ancient History

The sources of historical information on the Arab Semites and the Jews

Until recently and until the start of archaeological excavations in Iraq and more particularly Egypt during the 19th century, the Torah * — which the Jews claim to be that of Moses — was regarded as the most ancient source of information on the history and legal systems of the Near East. Religious belief clothed it in sanctity as being the Word of God given to Moses, and it was universally believed to have been the first Holy Book, without any precedent, which gave information about the nations and peoples of the region and especially about historical events, legislation and teaching.

This situation lasted until scholars were able to learn from manuscripts, stone engravings, writings on papyrus, bricks and clay tablets of the Sumerians, Akkadians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians that the Torah contained not only texts borrowed from or with close resemblances and similarities to

* This term in Arabic signifies the Pentateuch as well as the whole of the Old Testament. (Translator's note.)

more ancient teachings and beliefs, but that very often the accounts of events which it contained were contradicted by the facts from archaeological finds, and likewise with its legends.

From the first archeological finds and as the deciphering of ancient writings and the understanding of their meaning progressed, doubts began to occur in the minds of specialists and scientists about the contents of the Torah. Finally certainty succeeded doubt that the Torah was not the instigator of legal systems, not the first to make references to kings, peoples, nations and prophets, nor the first to conceive the legends which it recounts, but had been influenced by much that already existed in other nations, notably the Canaanites and Aramaeans who were of Arab Semite stock, as will be more fully discussed at a later stage.

Rahmatullah El-Hindi, in his book 'Izhar'l-Haq', quotes an extract from the historian John Milner, saying: *"All men of science are agreed on the fact that the original Torah (that of Moses) as well as the copies of the Old Testament were lost after Nebuchadnezzar's conquest and that when Jerusalem was captured by Antiocus, he condemned to death all who were found in possession of a copy of the Old Testament. The Jews then found this to be an opportune moment to rewrite the Torah. In doing so, they severely mutilated the Torah of Moses and put it out in a new form full of legends and falsehoods which are being contradicted daily by archaeological discoveries which are refuting all its contents."*

That was a unique occasion for the Jews, but there is also evidence that the Torah of Moses had been lost well before the date given by John Milner.

What was the object in mutilating the Torah?

The Jews had two objectives for doing this.

The first was to provide themselves with a historical background which would establish them, to the exclusion of all others, as being the 'chosen people'; that they were the 'elect' whom God had chosen above all others to bear this title; that they were the quintessence of all the nations, and that they were preferred above all others. In other words that if God had wished the other nations well he would have created them Jews from the beginning.

To justify this they had to provide themselves with divine support which would give them an aura of sanctity and make them worthy of respect. This is why they claimed descent from Abraham (El-Khalil: God's confidant), because Abraham was widely known as being a believer in God, a preacher of monotheism with a famous reputation amongst all the nations. His fame was such that it was a sort of 'badge of honour' to be connected with him.

Has it not been written in the Koran about Abraham's religion: "Say: As for me, my Lord hath guided me into a straight path; a true religion, the creed of Abraham, the sound in faith; for he was not of those who join gods with God."*

By linking themselves with someone as famous as Abraham they gained prestige in other peoples' eyes and claimed an Aramaic ancestry, they who before making this claim had no known ancestry until the Torah stated it for the first time.

Circumstances helped them to link themselves in this way with Abraham for at that time no one could check this theory or show that it was false, and also because those who wrote this story were so skilful and circumspect

*The Koran (VI:162), translation of J. M. Rodwell, Dent 1978. (Translator's note.)

that they were able to avoid any contestation of this claim.

They were thus able to give the Torah a stamp of sanctity and, in addition, to provide a well-known ancestry for their coreligionists who had no national community or ties other than their religion. With the same objective they claimed that they were the people of Moses who had come with him out of Egypt to settle in Palestine; that they were related to Jacob, Abraham's grandson, surnamed Israel, by calling themselves Israelites. This too, will be discussed at greater length subsequently.

In fact, there is no evidence that the Jews existed until some 700 years after the death of Israel, and then not as a specific people but as a religious sect as Muslims and Christians are. The invention of the doctrine of the 'chosen people', which had nothing to do with either Abraham, Jacob (Israel) or Moses, was to make the 'children of Israel', as they called themselves, the focal point of all the events set out in the Torah. The Torah was restructured so that it referred to them as 'the children of Israel' from Abraham's era (in 1900 B.C.) and before Jacob (Israel) was even born! The Jews appeared for the first time, in fact, in Moses' era in 1300 B.C. and the Torah was not written until 800 years later which was 1300 years after Abraham's era.

It was thus that the Torah began to refer to the Jews as if they were in existence at a period when they were not. This doctrine led them on to consider all Jews as being descendants of Israel including those of other nationalities such as the Europeans and the Khazar Jews (of Turkish stock)* who were converted to Judaism during the long period when the door to conversion was open and which was only finally closed in the 13th century A.D. Yes, all these people are, in the eyes of the Torah and the Jews, the descendants of Israel, an Israel who lived 3900 years ago...

*Cf. Arthur Koestler: "The Thirteenth tribe".

The second Jewish objective, with this new version of the Torah, was to establish Palestine as being their country of origin. They made sure that this idea should be ingrained in the minds of their initiates as a sacred and irrevocable religious doctrine passed down from Heaven. But the writers of the Torah forget, and the Torah even mentions it, that Palestine was a foreign country to Abraham who had emigrated from Mesopotamia, foreign also to his son Isaac and to his grandson Israel and his children all of whom had been born and brought up at Harran, in present day Turkey. (Logic like this is only valid if one accepts the theory that the Jews were the descendants of Israel.)

In addition while writing the Torah, the Jews invented the dogma that the land of Canaan had been given to Abraham and his descendants by God. From which it follows that it was God himself who ordered the extermination of the Canaanites and the expulsion from the land of the elderly, the women and the children in order to give it to the 'children of Israel', this Israel of whom they claim to be the descendants and thus connect themselves with the Arab Semites who had migrated from the Arabian Peninsular towards the Fertile Crescent.

The claiming of descent from Israel and Moses was the aim of the Torah's writers. They stated that the Jews were 'the People chosen by God', that they were descended from Israel, that Palestine was their country of origin and that this doctrine came from Abraham and Jacob. This is why the Koran calls them unbelievers and liars and curses them. The verse of the Koran says:

"But after this ye turned back, and but for God's grace and mercy toward you, ye had surely been of the lost! Ye know too those of you who transgressed on the Sabbath, and to whom we said, 'be changed into scouted apes'..." (II:61).

After all this, it is clear that, in writing the history of the

Arabs and the Jews, there can be no confidence in the facts contained in the present Torah...

In order to find out the truth

— on Jewish history
— on the veracity of the Torah and its contradictions and falsification
— on the Jewish claim to belong to the Arab Semite race

we will give a brief survey of history which has no other support than that of scientists and the facts of archaeological excavations, while avoiding as far as possible, those stories and accounts whose veracity is rendered suspect by the historical and archaeological evidence.

We will begin by a study of the Arab Semite migrations from the Arabian Peninsular towards the Fertile Crescent, the first to settle in this region and found kingdoms and empires.

The inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsular and the first occupiers of the Fertile Crescent

Before beginning the full account of the history of the Arabs and the Jews, we deem it necessary to give a short survey of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsular and of the first occupiers of the Fertile Crescent.

The Arabian Peninsular, mistakenly called an 'Island' in Arabic, is situated on the extreme western part of the Asian continent. It is bounded to the north by the Fertile Crescent (Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine), to the east by the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Sea *, to the south by the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean and to the west by the Red Sea.

Its inhabitants are Arabs from the same racial stock

* The Sea of Oman.

united through various dialects of the same language, through many links and especially through many traditions and customs in common. Legend traces their origins back to Sem, one of the sons of Noah.

They were traditionally divided into two types — those who were settled, and the nomads.

The settlers were very good farmers and cultivated the land, built houses, constructed monuments and fortresses, all this in those ancient times which go back more than 6000 years.

The nomads were obliged by their way of life to move from place to place in search of pasture for their flocks, or to carry the goods needed by the inhabitants on their asses' and then camels' backs. They called the Peninsular the 'Djezirat Al Arab' (the Arab Isle).

Ethnological experts believe that the distant ancestors of these ethnic types had reached a certain level of civilization in the southern part of the Peninsular, and that the country had many continuously flowing rivers and an abundant and regular rainfall. But at the end of the Ice Age, about 20,000 B.C., it underwent a climatic change which cut off the rainfall and caused the rivers to dry up and it became a desert. The change of the climate forced men and animals to migrate towards lands where water was more abundant. They moved towards the northern part of the Peninsular and spread out over the bordering area of the Fertile Crescent. The movement took place in a series of waves determined by the influences driving the inhabitants to emigrate. Some went eastwards towards Mesopotamia and the Euphrates; others settled in Palestine, Syria and the Lebanon; yet others moved westwards towards Mount Sinai and the lower Nile basin.

The Arab Semite migrations from the Peninsular towards the Fertile Crescent

The Fertile Crescent is the area of this shape to the north of the Arabian Peninsular. The eastern point consists of Iraq, the western is made up of Palestine, Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon, and its base rests on the northern end of the Peninsular.

With the exception of the Sumerians who had settled in a part of the eastern half, the first inhabitants were Arab Semites who had come from the Peninsular in several waves to settle in this fertile area.

A brief look at the history of the Fertile Crescent

All the archaeological excavations in the Arabian Peninsular and the conclusions of orientalists specialising in the period indicate that the Peninsular had a flourishing civilisation; that at some period in the distant past it had water resources, a fertile soil and enjoyed a prosperous agriculture and high level of civilisation for its period. But for natural reasons, there was a change of climate which gradually caused drought, an increase in temperature and the drying up of the springs, which over a period of time altered the conditions of life and, century by century, caused one area after another to become uninhabitable.

It was because the Fertile Crescent was well watered by rivers, springs, seasonal rains and had fertile soil that the succession of migratory waves came from the Peninsular, the earliest of which date back to the 3rd or 4th millenia B.C. The waves were called invasions and continued to take place up until recent times.

Because much of the fertile land of the Crescent was unoccupied, the invasions, migrations and settlements took place without meeting any opposition.

The fact that all these people were from the same stock (Arab Semite) and that they had no predecessors in the Fertile Crescent which itself had no natural barriers between it and the Peninsular, meant that it became a second homeland for the Arabs. The result of this was that those who had settled in the eastern half were known as the Eastern Semites, and those in the west the Western Semites.

The Canaanite migration to the west

The Canaanites were in the forefront of the first migrations from the Arabian Peninsular towards Palestine in the 3rd millenium B.C. Archaeological finds suggest that they may go back to an even earlier date. Some historians state that the town of Jericho, a Canaanite name, is the oldest town in the world still in existence.

Some of the towns in Palestine with Canaanite names are Beit-Sham, Majeddo and Jazer. In Jericho and Majeddo are the remains of the oldest Canaanite temples dating back to the beginning of the 3rd millenium B.C. Other excavations have revealed other Canaanite towns even older than Jericho and Jazer and dating between 3000-5000 B.C.

Jerusalem (taken by the Zionists as the capital of their State), was one of the oldest towns built by the Jebusites, cousins of the Canaanites, and since it can be used to help in establishing the antiquity of the Canaanites in Palestine, it deserves to be the subject of a special historical study.

Jerusalem in Ancient History

The town of Jerusalem provides the best evidence of the antiquity of Arab Semite settlements in Palestine and that they were there before any others.

It was founded more than 5000 years ago by the

Jebusites who were related to the Canaanites. It was the first town known to history to have born the name of the Town of Peace. Many historians say that the early kings were monotheistic. There were so many prophets living there that it would be true to say that there is not a patch of ground on which a prophet has not prayed. It will be remembered that it was from here that the Prophet Mohammed made his visit to Heaven, that before him it was where Christ lived and suffered and that to this day it is the holy place of the three monotheistic religions.

The first to plan and build Jerusalem was the Jebusite-Canaanite king Melchisedec who believed in one God amongst a Canaanite population which was mostly pagan. Melchisedec was so famous for his devoutness and piety that he was both king and High Priest. The Torah calls him the 'priest of God Most High'* and has made him the symbol of eternal priesthood. It was from him that Abraham himself received the blessing of the 'All Highest, God of Heaven and Earth.' This is how Jerusalem took the name of 'Town of Jebus', in honour of Melchisedec.

The names of the subsequent kings of Jerusalem are well known to history. The Canaanites, the first inhabitants, called the town Roshalm, Roshilem, Shalem or Shalum — all are names of a Canaanite god meaning Peace. The Torah calls them Orashalim and also Shalim or Salim, all Canaanite words. In some Canaanite inscriptions the town has also been called "Orossalem".

This all goes to prove the antiquity of Jerusalem and that it goes back to a date earlier than Israel, and in any event, before the appearance of the Jews in history.

* Genesis 14 : 18. (Translator's note.)

The Jebusite and Canaanite Remains

In addition to the fact that Jerusalem is one of the oldest Jebusite-Canaanite towns and that Jericho, as the oldest town in the world, is even older, there are other vestiges of the Jebusite presence in Jerusalem. One of these is the fortress built on a small hill called 'Zion'. It was surrounded by a wall with, on one side, a high tower which dominated the whole area.

The first name of Jerusalem was 'Town of Jebus'. The Torah refers to it as Jebus. Why then try to make it a Jewish town when the Torah says that it is the work of the Arab Semites and that it was built by the Jebusites, the cousins of the Canaanites?

The Jebusite fortress (the fortress of Zion) remained in Jebusite hands for three hundred years after the arrival of Moses and his followers on Canaanite soil. It only fell after David had finally destroyed the Canaanite rule.

The Temple was constructed in the northern part of the fortress of Zion. The primitive wall, built by the Jebusites the builders of Jerusalem, was in the shape of a rectangle with the fortress in the middle. The channel through which the waters of the Gihon flowed, ended in a basin inside the wall. All these remains, referred to in history and confirmed by the Torah, are Canaanite work which lasted until David took the fortress of Zion in the 10th century B.C. The town was thenceforth called the 'Town of David' in order to efface the Canaanite origin. This however lasted for only a short time and it reverted to the former name.

Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans but subsequently revived. The Crusaders took it in 1099 and made it the capital of a short-lived Latin kingdom. The Muslims recaptured it from the Crusaders and it remained in their hands

until the birth of the Zionist State. They called it 'Beit el Makdis' (the 'Sacred House').

The Canaanite Civilisation

Archaeological finds have shown that the Canaanites had a high degree of civilisation, noteworthy for its brilliance and for its trade. They discovered copper and the making of bronze by alloying copper and tin. The use of bronze and iron was widespread from the third millenium B.C. They were very skilful in working precious stones from which they made jewelry. This has been established from excavations in Egypt whose Pharaohs had raided the Canaanites and carried it away.

Amongst the oldest cultivations of the Canaanites, the most important were those of the vine and the fig. In some of the remains dating back to 2500 B.C. perfectly constructed wine and olive presses have been found. Wine was known to the Canaanites and they produced it in large quantities.

They knew also about glassmaking, weaving, painting, the manufacture of weapons and the construction of fortresses to defend their land. They excelled in irrigation, water control and its use in agriculture. Most important of all, however, was their invention of the written alphabet to take the place of cuneiform and hieroglyphics, with the result that their writing has become the basis of all forms of writing in both the Eastern and the Western civilised world.

The Phoenician-Canaanites

The Phoenicians inhabited the mountains and coastal regions of the Lebanon. They were Canaanites and were named 'Phoenicians' by the Greeks, that is, the 'People of

the Palm trees' (or of Purple?). Their most important towns were Haifa and Sarfand in Palestine, and Tyre, Sidon, Beirut and Byblos in the Lebanon. These have all been continuously inhabited since their foundation. The Phoenicians were famous for their trading and for their shipbuilding; their ships and trade went as far as the extreme limits of the Mediterranean coastline, especially that of North Africa. Because of its central position, Jerusalem was the hub of this trade, taking in goods from the Phoenician ports and forwarding them in all directions.

They founded trading posts at various points along the coastlines past which they sailed, and these colonies had their own Phoenician civilisation of which the main elements were taken from those of other neighbouring countries but mainly from the Canaanites. Their knowledge was so comprehensive that it can be said with justification that the Assyrians and the Greeks took an appreciable proportion of their culture from the Phoenicians as well as from the Babylonians. The towns of Tyre and Sidon became important centres of science and learning; and the Phoenician skill in mummification reached a level equal to that of the Egyptians. As far as religion was concerned, the Canaanites and Phoenicians were polytheistic and worshipped 'El', the most important of their gods. He controlled the phenomena of nature, especially water, and this belief is one which the Phoenicians inherited from the Arabian Peninsular, as evidenced by archaeological finds. Some historians say that the word 'El' derives from the ancient Arab dialects and means 'god'. There is a statue in Damascus Museum of the god El as being the greatest of the Canaanite gods, and historians now think that the Canaanites were the first to propagate an advanced form of religion amongst the Arab Semite peoples.

Evidence of all this has been found in the archaeological

excavations in the Lebanon, in Babylon and especially in Egypt, thereby proving that the Canaanites, and notably the Phoenicians, had reached a high degree of civilisation.

The Amorites (or Amoreans)

At the same time as the Canaanites were settling after their migration from the Arab Peninsular in the north-western part of the Fertile Crescent, other groups known as the Amoreans or Amorites had settled in the central part of Syria and the Lebanon, moving subsequently towards Palestine in the south and founding a kingdom known as 'Amorro'.

The Amorites took the town of Mari on the Euphrates to make their capital. Tablets found there show that they had a high level of civilisation, particularly in agriculture. They founded a number of small states in Mesopotamia at about the second millenium B.C. These small states existed until they were subjugated by the first Babylonian empire (under Hammurabi who was of Amorite descent). They regained some degree of independence however, after the fall of the first Babylonian dynasty.

The Amorite language was semitic, similar to that of the Canaanites and western Phoenicians. Their religion resembled those of the Arabian Peninsular and being farmers, they worshipped the goddess of water and springs, a cult practised in the Peninsular; a statuette of this goddess has been found and is in the Aleppo Museum. The rites of this water cult are very similar to those of the Semites in Mesopotamia and of the Egyptians.

In the excavations at Mari, since 1933, a great amount of information on the history of Amorro and other neighbouring countries has been found. The French team at Tell Hariri found the remains of a civilisation specific to

Mesopotamia going back to prehistoric times and the early dynasties of 3000 B.C.

Sumerian statuettes and a temple to the goddess Ishtar have been found in the excavations. There is also a tower and a large palace dating back to the Babylonian period, which was so large that it contained 300 rooms and courts. In Tell Hariri 24,000 clay tablets have been found recording a large number of diplomatic archives and the royal registers of the last king of the Mari dynasty called Zimrilin and dating back to the eighteenth century B.C. The discovery of these tablets threw light on the history of Greater Syria, on the whole of the Near East and on the role played by the Amorites in the second millenium B.C. They reveal that after the fall of the Akkadian empire, the Amorites penetrated into central Syria and the Lebanon and founded several small states in Mesopotamia, extending from Assur in the north to Larsa in the south. As we have already said, these lasted until they were absorbed by the Babylonians but subsequently regained their independence after the fall of Hammurabi's empire.

The Remains of the Amorite town of Ebla

As well as the finds at Mari, important discoveries have also been made on the site of Ebla, 30 miles south of Aleppo, of the ancient Amorite civilisation. The excavations show that this town also was a royal capital with 260,000 inhabitants. The kingdom extended from Sinai and included Palestine, the Lebanon, Syria and even the island of Cyprus.

Laid out on wooden shelves were 1500 clay tablets in cuneiform, the oldest Semitic language known hitherto, also found in the ruins of Ebla's royal palace. The kingdom flourished between 2400 and 2250 B.C. Some of the tablets

give the name Abroum as being one of the kings as well as of several other citizens.

These discoveries reveal another aspect of the civilisation founded by the Arab Semites in the Near East.

The Language, Literature and Ramifications of the Aramaeans

Amongst the migratory waves from the Arabian Peninsular which followed the Canaanites and the Amorites, were the Aramaeans who moved into the north-west of the Fertile Crescent. They quickly settled in the central part of the Euphrates basin towards the end of the 3rd millenium B.C. They borrowed much from the Amorite and Canaanite civilisations but kept their own language and dialects. They founded several kingdoms of which the most important were Damascus and Hama, and took over from the Amorites and Hittites in the Orontes valley.

The Aramaeans were made up of a number of tribes subdivided into several branches. Some took the name of 'Khalamo', others that of Khabiru, or Habiru or Abiru, a term used for nomadic Arab tribes which was ultimately replaced by Ibri or Ibrani. As will be explained in another part of this summary, this continued until it was given to the followers of Moses after they had appeared and because they were nomadic tribes. Further evidence of this meaning is that the Egyptians called the expelled descendants of the Hyksos by the name of Abriou or Apiru.

The Aramaeans were famous as traders because their geographical position enabled them to transport goods either to the east or to the west and because they had the camels to do this. Their trade and their language expanded greatly. To this day, traces of their language can be found in the dialects of countries bordering on Iraq (especially in

Syria) and the Lebanon. Resulting from this expansion of the language, the name 'Aramaean' was given to a large number of tribes and peoples living between Persia on the east and the Mediterranean coast on the west, and even as far as Armenia and Greece. All these peoples and countries were called Aramaean although some kept their own names such as the Assyrians, the Edomites and the Chaldeans.

The Jews used Aramaic for writing the Torah, and the Nabatean characters in which the Koran is written stem originally from Aramaic. The writing of the Armenians, Persians and Hindus have all come originally from Aramaic. This is how the Phoenician script which the Aramaeans used, spread throughout half of the ancient world. The Kufic and Neskhi Arabic scripts also originated as branches of the Aramaic.

Experts agree that the factor which helped its expansion was the simplicity of its alphabet and was the reason for it becoming the official language in several countries. The Jewish Talmud, the Book of Esdras and part of the Book of Daniel were written in a language derived from Aramaic; it is the basis of Syriac, also known as Chaldean.

In brief, the Aramaic language is more widespread than any other, has had more influence on the language of many peoples and has left more traces of itself than any other.

Arab historians have no doubt that the Aramaean tribes are of Arab origin; that they are of the same family; that all the Arab peoples go back to the 'Irm' tribe* in the Yemen and that there is archaeological evidence to prove that the Aramaeans were Arabs.

The Kingdom of Aram included several towns — Anat

* Aram son of Sem, the son of Noah.

give the name Abroum as being one of the kings as well as of several other citizens.

These discoveries reveal another aspect of the civilisation founded by the Arab Semites in the Near East.

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which is now Ana, and Rohobot now Rahabe situated on the Euphrates north of Abou-Kamal.

After the death of Solomon, the Aramaean kingdom greatly expanded and the Aramaeans held supremacy over the major part of the Middle East.

The Canaanites, Amorites and Aramaeans

The Canaanites, Amorites and Aramaeans were, then, of the same race — the Semitic Arab race which had emigrated from the Arabian Peninsular to the western part of the Fertile Crescent. They were the first to settle in the area where they founded great civilisations as evidenced by archaeological discoveries, which also confirm that the emigrants place of origin was Arabia. At the beginning, their language, customs and religion were the same, but with time, these diversified and changed.

Archaeological discoveries have, in addition, revealed that other peoples had preceded the Canaanites, Amorites and Aramaeans in the migrations from the Peninsular, but moving to Egypt rather than to the Fertile Crescent and at a time which was earlier than the birth of the Egyptian civilisation; that these people had most probably taken the route via Aden and Sinai; that they brought with them a civilisation which was unknown in Egypt up until that time; and that this happened around 4000 B.C.

Subsequently other peoples, known as the Hyksos (nomadic shepherds), originating from the Arabian Peninsular, had taken over Syria and Palestine and from there, with the Canaanites and Amorites, had attacked Egypt through Sinai, ruling it for approximately two centuries (18th to 16th B.C.).

Egyptian archaeological finds suggest that the Semitic Arabs had a strong influence on the Egyptian civilisation,

and there are some historians who state that even though the Egyptians and the Semitic Arabs may not be of the same stock, they are very closely related.

The most important migrations to the Fertile Crescent

One of the earliest migrations of Semitic Arab peoples from the Arabian Peninsular was that of the Akkadians around 4000 B.C. They settled on the right bank of the Euphrates in the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent, concentrating on agriculture and animal husbandry. They gradually took over the middle Euphrates basin and founded an empire, including a number of colonies which later increased to include the major part of the western Fertile Crescent, the lands of Elam and Assur as well as a part of Asia Minor. The most famous town was Akkad, the capital. The founder of this kingdom is reputed to be Sargon the Great (2500-2400 B.C.).

The Akkadians are considered to be the innovators of the imperial system of government in that they had provincial governors ruling in the name of the overlord. They were the first nation to make use of this political system which later became commonplace and is still used to this day. They also introduced types of cultivation which were unknown in Mesopotamia such as that of the fig, the vine and the red rose.

The Semitic Akkadians and the Sumerians

The Semitic Akkadians came into conflict with the Sumerians who were not part of the main body of the Semitic race. The Sumerians, whose ethnic and linguistic origins have not, as yet, been clearly established, had a flourishing civilisation between the fourth and third millenia B.C. They have the prestige of having invented writing. The

characters were wedge-like in appearance and were known as 'cuneiform'.

They recorded their history, aspirations, achievements and knowledge in this script. They used sun or heat-dried clay tablets for this purpose since it was the best for withstanding the deterioration of time. The Sumerian language was very peculiar; words were generally in the form of a single syllable; sentences were constructed by the simple expedient of putting one syllable after another. Architecture made great advances with the Sumerians especially in the form of public monuments, temples and fortresses. The temples were designed as a number of superimposed stories, consecrated to their hierarchical gods. These temples were the precursors of those built in steps, known as 'zigurats', such as that at Ur near Nassiriya. The altar was at the top where the ceremonies took place. In the building of their palaces, houses, temples and public buildings, the Sumerians had developed a special technique for decorating their colonnades and walls with mosaics. They excelled in the arts of sculpture and inlay work and had erected statues of their important people and their gods; they excelled also in the art of making ornaments of gold, silver and other metals.

The characteristic feature of the Sumerian period is the system of 'city states' and the concept that the State should be responsible for administration and government. The 'city state' played an important part in the organisation of the economic, social, industrial and political life of the Sumerians; it was a major step forward in the field of national autonomy — to the extent that some historians describe this period as "the age of the Sumerian city states".

This is a suitable point for quoting Sir Leonard Wolley *

* L. Wolley (1880-1960), an English archaeologist who became world famous for his discovery of the 'royal tombs' at Ur. (Translator's note.)

on the Sumerians, about whom he said: "Their culture enlightened a world still immersed in barbarity and was the first step towards the birth of civilisation; the discovery of this civilisation eradicates the claim that the Greeks were the originators of all the arts which they had created without any outside inspiration or guidance". The Akkadians, contemporary with the Sumerians in the south of Mesopotamia, were influenced by their civilisation, borrowed their cuneiform writing and learnt to trade; they used their weights and measures and their system of urban administration, known today as local administration; they also learnt the arts of sculpture and inlay work in which they, too, excelled. They adopted many of the terms and expressions of the Sumerian language.

Like other Semitic languages such as Arabic, Syriac and Assyrian, the Akkadian language is grammatical with various declensions, unlike Sumerian in which unaltered words were placed one after the other, as has been mentioned earlier. It should be realized that the Akkadian language, from the middle of the first millenium B.C., was the only language used in Akkad, Babylon and Assur. This continued until the 8th century B.C. when Aramaic took its place and reduced it to the status of a dead language.

The first to put an end to the autonomy of the Sumerian 'city states' was Sargon the Great. In combination with neighbouring countries he created a powerful united kingdom which included most of Mesopotamia, and was called "The kingdom of Sumer and Akkad, rulers of the world." He was the founder of the city of Akkad, referred to earlier, which gave the Akkadians their name. It was at that time that the initial phase of cities and city states ended in Mesopotamia and it became one kingdom with extensions to countries outside Mesopotamia itself. We can justifiably describe this kingdom as being the first Semitic

empire in the world; for, indeed, it is the first Semitic victory recorded in history.

In the history of the Semitic race, it was Sargon, as the ruler, who succeeded in creating a kingdom in the western part of Asia extending from the land of Elam in the east to the shores of the Mediterranean in the west and including the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates to the north and west.

It would seem, therefore, that the confrontation between the Semites, settled in a large area of the Near East which they had civilised over the centuries, and the non-Semites goes back into the earliest historical times. In the oldest Sumerian legends there are references to conflicts between the city kings. W. Durant, author of 'A History of Civilisation', states that the confrontation between Semite and non-Semite played an important part in the history of the Near East, and that this same conflict, after a period of 6000 years, still continues today. He also says: "It seems that the rivalries were between powerful royal families who had held their thrones and had prospered in the Semitic town of Kish around 4500 B.C. and others who had prospered in the Sumerian town of Ur around 3500 B.C.; it is in this rivalry between the two centres of ancient civilisation that the origin of the confrontation between Semites and non-Semites can be found and which continued throughout the entire history of the Middle East — a conflict which was bloody and continual. It began with the supremacy of Kish, the Semitic town, and this was extended by the conquests of the Semitic kings Sargon and Hammurabi; it was followed by the conquest of Babylon by the Aryan invaders Cyrus and Alexander in the 6th and 3rd centuries B.C.; by the wars between the Crusaders and the Muslims; by the commercial competition between the two sides, and finally, by the contemporary attempts of the

English to impose their influence over the Semitic nations."

The Assyrians

Like the Akkadians, the Assyrians had migrated from the Arabian Peninsular. They were Semites who crossed the Tigris and Euphrates to settle in northern Mesopotamia at the eastern extremity of the Fertile Crescent, at a date similar to the Akkadian migration around 4000 B.C. The Assyrians soon founded a kingdom of which Assur was the capital. After having been subject to the Akkadians at the beginning, they subsequently built up their first empire from Assur.

However, they lost their independence to Hammurabi and then became subject to the Babylonians. After this phase, Assyria rebuilt an empire, extended its influence and territory, made Nineveh its capital and conquered immense tracts of territory.

During the time of Sargon II, Assyria conquered Samaria, capital of the kingdom of Israel, and destroyed it completely.

From amongst the other Assyrian emperors, one should mention Sennacherib, successor of Sargon II, who waged a campaign against the kingdom of Judah, which gave the Jews their name and, since the death of Solomon, had taken Jerusalem as its capital. (It should be mentioned here that after Solomon's death, his kingdom was split in two; the kingdom of Israel with Samaria as its capital which was destroyed by Sargon II, and the kingdom of Judah annihilated by Sennacherib who only lifted the siege of Jerusalem after the levying of a heavy tribute.)

Subsequently Assyria, during Asarhaddon's reign, conquered Egypt occupying Memphis the capital of Lower Egypt and Thebes in Upper Egypt.

The Assyrian remains at Nineveh and the archaeological discoveries in Palestine, Syria and Egypt testify to the high degree of civilisation achieved by the Assyrians who also borrowed from their subject peoples. All these finds demonstrate the astonishing progress of civilisation at this period.

The first Babylonian empire (1894-1595 B.C.)

The migration of the ancient Babylonians can claim to be one of the first from the Arabian Peninsular. They were Amorite peoples who moved from the north of the Khabur river (north-west of the Euphrates) in order to settle in the area of Babylon where they founded a kingdom (in the 19th century B.C.) whose rulers were the first Babylonian dynasty. The dynasty consisted of nineteen kings, one of whom was the famous Hammurabi on whose stele was carved the code of laws which has immortalised his name and about which more will be said when we compare it with the law of the Torah.

Hammurabi took over all the countries around Babylon; he subjugated Assur in the north, conquered the Akkadians and occupied their capital Mari; in the south he annexed a part of Sumerian territory and thus created a vast empire.

The Hammurabi period during the first Babylonian dynasty is considered to be the most outstanding both for its prosperity and its stability as well as for the improvements in agriculture and the prevailing rule of law. Archaeological excavations have revealed the flourishing civilisation which flowered during the period of the first dynasty.

The Chaldeans

The Chaldeans, who were of Aramaic origin, appeared for the first time in Mesopotamia in the 18th century B.C. They later founded a kingdom in southern Mesopotamia and then in the 8th century B.C., conquered Babylon. After being defeated by the Assyrians, they fell back on Babylon at the beginning of the 7th century B.C. and established the Chaldean empire.

Their rule extended as far as Palestine and Syria. The most famous of the Chaldean kings was Nebuchadnezzar, called Bakhtanassar by the Arabs. Following a campaign against the Assyrians, Nebuchadnezzar led an expedition against the kingdom of Judah, captured Jerusalem and took the Jews off into captivity to Babylon in two successive deportations.

Chaldean power continued to increase until the day that they were crushed by the attacks of Cyrus, king of the Persians, who captured Babylon and gave the Jews the choice of remaining in Mesopotamia or of returning to Jerusalem; some decided to remain, others to return to their own country.

Archaeological discoveries bear glorious witness to the Chaldean civilisation. They reveal their great knowledge of astronomy and mathematics; they were, in particular, the discoverers of the laws of solar and lunar eclipses. They were the first to have defined the measurement of time into hours and minutes. They were also the first to have devised calendars for calculating the seasons and time periods. Furthermore, they excelled in the building and beautifying of the edifices which made Babylon the largest and most beautiful city of its time.

The later Semitic Arab migrations

The history of the movement of human beings from the Arabian Peninsular is the same as that of the civilisation of the Semitic Arab East. It is a fact that "the desert and the Fertile Crescent are the extension of the Arabian Peninsular and that the migrations between the two regions are as old as the regions themselves".

The movement of peoples did not end with the migrations of antiquity but continued throughout the centuries, and even until now. An example of a modern migration is that of the Shammar tribes who left their home in the Ha'il region in order to settle in Iraq. Another contemporary example of a tribal migration from Arabia to Iraq is that of the two great Eneze tribes, originating from Muntafiq, who came from the Hejaz and Al-Saadoun.

Even after the tribal territories had been defined and the farmers had settled near the rivers and were cultivating their land, and even though the nomads had defined the grazing areas for their animals in the semi-desert areas, the conflicts between the two never ceased. The Arabs, however, remained masters of the desert and controlled the trade routes which linked the two halves of the civilised world, Mesopotamia and Syria, and this control was not only over the caravan routes but the watering points as well. As a result of this complete monopoly they accumulated enormous wealth, because it was only the Bedouin who could take the risk of a desert existence.

After the fall of Nineveh and the disappearance of the Assyrian rule (612 B.C.), Arab tribes moving from the west and south-west began to spread out into the desert to the north of Mesopotamia. There was, therefore, a new important migration which extended as far as Nizib and Diar-Bakr. These movements resulted in the arrival of new Arab

tribes to the north of the town of Raha and as far as the Antioch plain. The entire northern region of Mesopotamia became known as 'Arabaia', or Arab territory, about a century after the fall of Nineveh. After the decline of the Seleucids, the Arab tribes found refuge in the fertile lands of Mesopotamia and extended their rule along the banks of the Middle Euphrates during and after the 2nd century B.C. It was thus that several Arab principalities came into existence.

From amongst these we can specify the Nabatean kingdom which stretched from the Euphrates to the Red Sea with Petra as its capital; the Arab State of Palmyra (Tadmor); the Emirate of Hatra (now in the desert near Wadi El Tharthar) which stretched from the Tigris in the east to the Euphrates in the west, Mount Sinjar in the north, Madaen in the south, and to the north-west as far as Khabur and Nizib; and finally, the kingdom of Raha in northern Mesopotamia which lasted for three and a half centuries, from the 2nd century B.C. until the 3rd century A.D.

The Munzurite kingdom also made its appearance in southern Mesopotamia and enjoyed the protection and support of the Sassanids; the Ghassanids also appeared in southern Syria and were, in turn, protégés of Rome. The Bedouin Arabs were thus, for centuries, able to exploit the hostility between the Persians and the Romans by making use of the strategic advantages which they could offer to either of the two sides.

One can also instance other Arab principalities which appeared after the decline of the Seleucids, at Homs, Aleppo and Mishan (Arabic Doust Missan), a town near Bassora. And lastly there were the principalities of Manbij, Baless and Rassafa which, according to some experts, had rulers of Arab origin.

We may, therefore, conclude that the Arabian Peninsular was the mainspring of all the Semitic Arab migrations; that these migrations continued over a period of more than 2500 years until the great migration of the 8th century A.D. which overwhelmed not only the Fertile Crescent but also North Africa and Andalusia, bringing Arab civilisation to all those countries conquered in the name of Islam.

This completes, therefore, a brief survey of the first settlers in the Fertile Crescent. They built towns, dug irrigation canals, cultivated the land, constructed palaces and propagated their civilisation. They have left remains which bear witness to the brilliant achievements of their civilisation in the arts and sciences, in the invention of the alphabet, of writing and of astronomy, of the institution and promulgation of a body of law. With the exception of the Sumerians, these peoples were all Semitic Arabs who for various reasons — drought, the drying up of springs and wells — had emigrated from the Arabian Peninsular in the far distant past. With the exception of the Sumerians, no other peoples had settled in the area before the Arabs.

The origins and civilisation of the Semites

Historians are unanimous in the view that the Akkadians, Amorites, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Aramaeans, Assyrians, Moabites, Edomites, Hebrews, Nabateans and Arabs were all Semites who speak interconnected languages stemming from one source, and that their origin was the Arabian Peninsular, the cradle of the Semitic civilisation. This has been confirmed by many linguistic clues, by customs and by archaeological finds. It is a fact which is so firmly established that there are some experts who go so far as to say that the starting point of the migra-

tions was the central part of the Peninsular, in particular of the Babylonians, the Canaanites and the Aramaeans; there are others who assert that the Yemen was the homeland of these Semites. Whatever the answers may be, it was in the Arabian Peninsular, and not elsewhere, that the Semites were first known, based upon the archaeological research, studies and finds.

The foregoing would seem to indicate that, of the Semites, the Arabs are those who managed to preserve the pure Semitic characteristics. The Arab language is the most revealing evidence of the original Semitic language and its various dialects, and that, in the distant past, it was the Arabs who had a very high level of civilisation from the points of view of both political and social organisation. There is evidence of this in excavations in the Yemen, in Greek and Roman records, in the Old Testament and also in Pharaonic, Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, some of which go back to the fourth millenium B.C.

There was a succession of kingdoms in the Yemen, those of Qataban, of Ossan, of Saba and Himyar. The rulers of Saba are supposed to have built the largest dam of antiquity for the conservation of water and for irrigation. The dam was called Sudd Ma'rib (Marib Dam) and at a certain point in time its maintenance was so neglected that it was destroyed by the great flood called 'al-Arim', a disaster which initiated one of the last of the Arab migrations, those of the Munzurites and the Ghassanids shortly after the birth of Christ.

Each of these kingdoms had a high level of civilisation, especially in the fields of agriculture and trade and, from the centre of the Peninsular, were a guiding light to other civilisations.

The Arab language within the framework of other Semitic languages

Historians have no doubt that all the tribes originating from the Arabian Peninsular spoke a language which we will call the Arab mother-tongue; and that following the dispersion, the language was subjected to the influence of other dialects which enriched it with new words, new intonations and new declensions unknown to the original version. It was, therefore, quite normal that the mother-tongue should acquire new grammatical rules, new meanings and new words which differentiated it from the original according to its separation from it in space and time. Over the course of years, the language has become a new one, clearly different from the mother-tongue used by the various peoples at the beginning. Nevertheless, the new language has preserved characteristics which link it with the mother-tongue, and these are one of the best proofs of the people's common origins. The origin in common is the same Semitic language — given this name in order to differentiate it from the Aryan and Tauranian languages — and because Sem, the son of Noah, is the branch from which the Semites are the descendants.

We should not forget that the Semitic languages are characterised by roots composed of three letters which vary according to their derivation and accentuation. Those experts who make use of the main characteristics of the original language in order to determine racial origins, have positioned the Semitic peoples in four categories:

1. The eastern Semites: Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians.
2. The northern Semites: Amorites and Aramaeans.

3. The western Semites: Phoenicians, Moabites and Hebrews. *
4. The southern Semites: Maneans, Sabeans, Ethiopians, Arabs and Amharites.

There are some linguists who maintain that the language spoken today by the desert Bedouins is the closest to the Semitic mother-tongue and that, generally speaking, it is the mother of all the Semitic languages. They make this assertion because these tribes have remained cut off from other peoples and is the reason for their having preserved the pure form and characteristics of their speech.

Some experts claim that Arabic is the oldest of the Semitic languages and that it has enough flexibility and vitality to have survived from its origins up until today, whereas other Semitic languages have either disappeared or only exist as dead languages. The study of Semitic languages and research into their origins depends basically today upon the knowledge of Arabic.

Arabic was also the origin of the invention of the alphabet which scholars consider to be the basis of all civilisations. In fact, it was the Canaanites who were the first to adopt the alphabet. The Phoenicians borrowed it and passed it on to the Greeks and the Latins who preserved the Arabic name of alphabet — aleph (Greek alpha) and beth (Greek beta).

The term 'Semite' as a designation of the peoples who emigrated from, as well as those who remained in, the Arabian Peninsular is of relatively recent origin, coined by A. L. Schlözer (1781) the German scholar.** Historians reject

* As has been mentioned, the author uses the word Hebrew in a special sense to denote the Arab nomads; this point is further developed at a later stage. (Translator's note.)

** Cf. K. Marx; correspondence with Engels.

this designation and consider it to be inaccurate not only when applied to the ancestors of those peoples but also to the mother-tongue spoken at that time. They consider that the designation of 'Arabs' is more accurate and was the one used in the inscriptions found on Babylonian monuments. There are some orientalists who state that the terms 'Semite' and 'Arab' should be regarded as synonymous.

Palestine and the Arabs

The history of the Arab (or Semite according to choice) migrations confirms that the first inhabitants of Palestine were the Jebusites who, with the Canaanites, originated from the same stock and region. It is also clear that the Canaanites were the first migrants to settle in Palestine and that one of their tribes, the Jebusites, built Jerusalem and that neither history, archaeological discoveries nor specialised research suggests that they had any predecessors in this region. Even although one can agree that men could have lived in Palestine before the Canaanites, they must have been very thinly scattered for they have left no traces.

Thus, from the 3rd millenium (some historians say the 4th), Palestine was completely Arab in population, traditions, civilisation and language. There is no intermediary link with Moses' period and the arrival of the Jews in the land of Canaan which took place 2000 years later. The archaeological discoveries in Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Egypt confirm that the only inhabitants of Palestine in antiquity were the Arab Canaanites. The best proof is the name Palestine itself which came from the migration of the Philistines from Crete who intermarried with the Canaanites. Further proof is in the name Jerusalem which confirms by its original name that the town is Canaanite Arab.

How then can the connection be made between Moses and the Jews and ancient Palestine? If it were a fact, what was the Jewish role during this archaic period? How did they share in the civilisations of the Canaanites, Amorites, Aramaeans and Babylonians if they really had been in Palestine 2000 years or more before there is clear evidence of their presence?

Archaeological discoveries reveal nothing about the history or existence of the Jews amongst the peoples and inhabitants of Palestine of antiquity and they are the strongest evidence in refutation of their claim. It is enough to recall the study of the origin of place names such as Jericho, Jerusalem, Zion (a hill which was a part of the Jebusite defenses) which are all Canaanite names, to establish the Arab origins of ancient Palestine. Even the name Israel is that of a town in Palestine and was in existence before Moses and the Jews made their appearance. How then can they contest its Arab origin simply because the name is written in the Torah which they themselves wrote comparatively recently?

Today, in occupied Palestine, the Jews are trying to revive the old names on the pretext that they are Hebraic; names such as Israel and Zion (which they have taken as national emblems) whereas in fact, they are pure Arab words, confirmed by linguistic research as well as by the archaeological studies and the ancient inscriptions on bricks and tablets.

Whence, then, does the claim for the ancient existence of the Jews in Palestine come? Whence their claim to be called 'the children of Israel'? Their only support for these claims is from the much more recent evidence of the Torah.

PART TWO

The Jews in Antiquity

The Torah and Judaism

As we have said, the Torah is the Jewish holy book, of which the origin, they say, goes back to Moses.

But it has been established that the Torah of Moses disappeared and has never been found (possibly consumed by the flames when Jerusalem was captured). The existing Torah was written from memory by the Jews during their exile in Babylon.

It was written in a language called 'the Aramaic of the Torah', a dialect borrowed from the Aramaeans, the origin of which goes back to the Arab mother-tongue. The form of the letters used for writing the Torah are those known as 'square' letters, also borrowed from the Aramaic alphabet. These same letters are still used today in the writing of modern Hebrew. The Jewish religion is contained in the Torah, which is also known as the Old Testament. In the 3rd century A.D. the Jews wrote the Talmud, a collection of commentaries on the Torah and its teachings. And it was not long before the Talmud acquired the same divine blessings as the Torah, as will be explained later.

The Books of the Old Testament

The Old Testament consists of three parts. The first part, the Pentateuch consists of the following five books:

1. Genesis (or the History of the World), which deals with the Creation and the history of the 'chosen people' (the name which the Jews give themselves).
2. Exodus, the account of the departure of the Jews from Egypt to Sinai under Moses' leadership.
3. Leviticus, consecrated to the descendants of Levi (one of Jacob's children) destined for the priesthood, which describes the ceremonial of the Jewish service.
4. The Book of Numbers, concerned with the definition of boundaries and the census of the tribes of the 'chosen people'.
5. Deuteronomy, which is the complement to Mosaic Law.

The second part, called *Nebiim* (the Prophets) has two subdivisions; the first concerned with the ancient prophets and the second with the more recent ones.

The third part consists of the *Ketoubim* (the Hagiographa).

In total the Old Testament consists of 39 books, but the Samaritans of Nablus only recognise the first five on the grounds that only they are the ones which came from Moses and that the others are apocryphal.

The chronological fantasies of the Torah
The Periods of Abraham, Moses and the Jews

The Jews, with the goal of linking their origin with Abraham and his grandson Jacob (Israel) and that of Moses with Jacob's lineage, filled the Torah, in its rewritten version after the loss of the Moses original, with stories, events and relationships which had never existed and which are refuted by other stories and other legends sometimes written by the same authors of the new Torah without their being aware of the contradictions.

But on the other hand, archaeological discoveries have

proved that there is no direct link between one or other of the following periods:
— the period of Abraham and his grandsons,
— the period of Moses (his origins and religion),
— the period of the Jews (their origins and religion).

Some archaeologists even state that there is no relationship between the Aramaeans (with whom Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were connected) and the Jews. They maintain that the archaeological records available are sufficient to refute categorically the claim to a relationship between the Hebrews and the Aramaeans.

As far as the stories and legends in the Torah are concerned, and which are contradicted by the Torah itself, we will be content with mentioning two (this résumé does not permit us to quote more):

1. Having made the general statement that all men are, with equal right, the children of Abraham, the Torah contradicts itself by supporting the claim that Jehovah promised Abraham that the Jewish people would be preferred above all others.
2. After professing belief in a Jehovah who was greater and more powerful than the gods of all other nations (which in itself recognises the existence of other gods) the Torah contradicts itself by saying that there is only one God who is Jehovah.

Abraham and the Torah

The period of Abraham is a quite special one which is distinctive both from the ethnic and linguistic points of view as well as from its special links with the Arabian Peninsular, with the mother-tongue and with the tribes of the Peninsular, tribes which were later known as 'El Arab El

Ba'ida', meaning the 'lost Arabs' because all traces of them have been lost.

Historians say that these 'lost Arabs' and the Aramaean tribes to which Abraham belonged came from the same stock; that Palestine was only a transitory country for Abraham (and for the children of Isaac and Jacob) where they had lived as foreigners amongst the Canaanites, the original inhabitants; that the Torah itself describes them as migrants and foreigners in Palestine; that the twelve children of Israel (Jacob) were all born at Harran where their father was living; that these children of Israel are the same as those mentioned in the Torah and that Harran is near Raha on the Euphrates on the road to Mosul; and all this means that the Torah itself, the only existing holy book of antiquity, is the first to refute the existence of a link between Abraham and Palestine as far as his origin is concerned. On the contrary, it says that his place of origin was the Chaldean city of Ur in Mesopotamia or, at the best, that of Harran where the Aramaean tribes to which he belonged had settled.

How can a connection between Palestine and Abraham be found? And what is the justification for considering Palestine to have been his ancient place of origin where he and his sons after him would have had rights of property?

In addition, archaeological discoveries and orientalists' research indicate that Abraham lived in the 19th century B.C., that is to say, some seven hundred years before the period of Moses and his followers, and more than a thousand years before the appearance of the Jews. They only begin to be mentioned at the time of the foundation of the kingdom of Judah from which they took their name, or in other words, at the time of the division of the tribes (930 B.C.).

Lastly, it should be noted that the description 'Hebrew'

given to Abraham in the Torah simply means that he belonged to the nomadic Arab peoples of which the Aramaean tribes were a part. The terms 'Abiru' or 'Khabiru' in recently discovered ancient inscriptions are used with this meaning, as we have already mentioned, and go back to a time preceding the appearance of Moses and the dialect known as the 'Hebraic tongue'.

Let us also note that the Koran never uses the term 'Ibri' or 'Ibrani' to describe the Jews; it calls them 'the children of Israel', 'the followers of Moses', and 'Jews' — meaning 'those who have embraced Judaism'.

Abraham's Religion

The Koran, when referring to Abraham's religion, makes a clear distinction between the religion and the period of the patriarch, between the religion and the period of the Jews and, finally, between the religion and the period of the Christians. This is the reason why a verse of the Koran says: "O people of the Book! Why dispute about Abraham, when the Law and the Evangel were not sent down till after him? Do ye not then understand?" *

The Koran also says: "Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian; but he was sound in faith, a Muslim; and not of those who add gods to God." **

Majmaa El Bayane, in explanation of this verse, has made a commentary which may be summarised as follows: "Everyone agrees that Abraham is worthy of being described by the term 'muslim',*** in the sense that he believed in One God, in accordance with the teaching of Islam. And given that at that time there was neither Torah

* The Koran, III:58.

** Idem, III:60.

*** Etymologically: 'submissive to God'.

nor Gospel to determine whether Abraham was Jew or Christian, it follows that the discussions of those who want to link Abraham and his religion with themselves should come to an end."

Majmaa El Bayane also gives the following word for word explanation: "It is accepted that the Jews should give the name 'Jew' to he who follows the precepts of the Torah and believes in its doctrine; that the Christians should apply the name 'Christian' to those who follow the precepts of the Gospel and believe in its doctrine. As a result, the Koran points out that both the Torah and the Gospels were revealed after Abraham's period; he cannot, therefore, be made to conform to their doctrines. On the contrary, the Muslims have never claimed that a Muslim is someone who submits to the dispositions in the Koran because Islam is a religion which is independent of legal dispositions. This is why we call it Islam, in the sense that we use the same name as that which God used..."

From the foregoing it is clear that there were no links of blood or religion between Abraham and the Jews; that the Jews were a mixed ethnic group whose members had no links of family relationship but that all had the same religious belief. They were not the descendants of the lineage of Abraham who was the first to preach a belief in One God.

It is a fact that historians do not agree on Abraham's birthplace, claimed by some to have been at Ur in Chaldea, by others to have been at Khotha, at Birs Nimrud or at Uruk; but at the same time, all agree that he was born in Mesopotamia; that he migrated to Harran (where the sons of Jacob were born later); that he had been in Damascus from where he went on to Egypt and then returned to the land of Canaan.

Abraham had such a strong personality that people said

that he was an "emir". As an Aramaean, related by origin with the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsular, he maintained these connections throughout his life. He left behind him the famous monument in Mecca. * He was well known for having large herds of animals and for having persuaded a number of people to accept his beliefs, and these were known as 'the children of Israel' (after the name of his grandson). The Koran also calls them 'the children of Israel' in order to make a clear distinction between them and the Jews. It is also interesting to note that 'the children of Israel' are mentioned with an eulogious inflexion whereas the name 'Jews' is sometimes pejorative.

Moses and the Torah

A number of clues have led some historians to think that the prophet Moses was of Egyptian nationality ** and that he had been brought up at the court of the Pharaoh Akhenaton by his daughter.

Moses professed the belief in One God, identical to that of Akhenaton. Some affirm that Akhenaton was the first to accept Divine Unity in its pure form whereas others give precedence to Abraham.

Other research has provided indications that Moses could have been a general in the Egyptian army, had married an Ethiopian and lived in the 13th century B.C. He may have left Egypt at the head of a group of soldiers accompanied by those descendants of the Hyksos who had remained in the country, who had adopted his religion. They would have left Egypt to escape the persecutions following Akhenaton's death and because their beliefs did not

* The Kaaba. (Translator's note.)

** This was also Freud's theory (cf. *Moses and Monotheism*).

conform with those of the Egyptian majority. Moses would have led them to Palestine, territory inhabited by the Canaanites for nearly 2000 years and where they had a kingdom and a flourishing civilisation. Naturally, they would have been foreigners there for they spoke the Egyptian language. There would have been no connection at all between them and the 'children of Israel', just as there would have been none between them and the 'children of Israel' who came to Egypt in Joseph's period about 600 years before Moses. These had integrated with the Egyptians to the extent that history reveals no identifiable traces of them.

Furthermore, archaeological discoveries suggest that this was not the first migration from Egypt to Palestine. It had been preceded by several expeditions during the era of the first Pharaohs; it is established that the Pharaoh Totmes III, during the 15th century, personally led seventeen expeditions into Asia, all of which took the road through the land of Canaan.

This historical evidence leads one to think that the expedition recounted in the Torah as having been undertaken in the 13th century B.C. by the 'children of Israel' under Moses' leadership was, in fact, only one of many purely Egyptian expeditions which had already been going on for a long time.

The group led by Moses which took this route from Egypt, spoke the Egyptian language and appears to have had no connection at all with Israel. They did not, as the Torah states, come into Palestine as conquerors. Research on this aspect has demonstrated that the Hebrews (or followers of Moses) who came from Egypt, arrived in Canaan in a series of waves of which the first was that led by Moses whose sole objective was to find a safe refuge and the means of subsistence. The Torah, in several instances con-

firms that the Jewish tribes cohabited with the Canaanites and other inhabitants of Palestine.

A number of writers also think that the people who left Egypt under Moses' leadership and who were destitute, persecuted under forced labour construction work, were not Israelites but Egyptian soldiers who had remained faithful to the religion of Akhenaton together with those Hyksos who had been able to survive until then. Neither of them had any connection with the 'children of Israel'. None of the ancient inscriptions on Egyptian monuments mention that the children of Israel were an individual entity within Egypt.

The migrants whom Moses led into the land of Canaan were mainly of the common people without education or culture. It did not take them long to fraternise with the Canaanites, adopt their customs and learn their language and writing. They also adopted the beliefs of the Canaanite pagan majority and abandoned Moses' religion based upon faith in One God and in the brotherhood of all mankind — the same as that of Abraham.

The Torah (Old Testament) says that Solomon himself deviated from the straight path and built shrines to the pagan gods, an indication that he would have been influenced by Canaanite beliefs.

The Torah also says that Moses' followers reverted to the worship of idols and that they and their kings continued to do so for more than three hundred years, even after the division following Solomon's death which split the Jews into two separate kingdoms. This again suggests that polytheism was the preponderant religion in Palestine, and that the Jews were only a minority group during their entire sojourn there.

The Law of Moses

There is absolutely no doubt that a written code of law, known as the Torah, has been lost, and that neither history nor archaeological discoveries have so far been able to determine what happened to it and in which language it was written. All that is known about it is that it was the Torah of Moses.

There exist, however, some clues which lead one to think that it was written in Egyptian hieroglyphs, that is in the same language as that of Moses and his followers.

As we have said, the existing Torah came from the pens of the priests and scholars who wrote it during the Exile in Babylon in the 6th century B.C. about eight hundred years after the time of Moses.

For this reason it is difficult to claim that the new Torah is identical to that of Moses since it has been written eight centuries after his period — a period of which no reliable traces have remained. All that one knows about the law of Moses is that it called for the worship of One God who made no distinctions between his creatures except by their actions; that is to say, the same belief as Akhenaton as archaeological finds have proved.

The Jews

The Jewish period, i.e. the period of the appearance of Judaism as such, only began in the 6th century B.C., after the Babylonian exile which had happened in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans. The name 'Jew' itself is derived from Judah, the kingdom which, after the schism, was based upon Jerusalem. The religion did not finally come to be called Judaism until after the priests and religious leaders undertook the task of writing the Torah.

Jewish ethnocentrism stems from the religion of Jehovah, the text for which was written by the Jewish priests who traced their ancestry and history back to Abraham and claimed that Jehovah had promised to give them Palestine, even though there is no historical link of blood or religion which connects them with the period of Abraham — or of Moses — as archaeological finds and recent studies have proved.

The Jewish religion is sacerdotal in that it is the rabbis who interpret the Torah and act as intermediaries between their coreligionists and Jehovah. The sacerdotal duty is hereditary and reserved exclusively for the Levites, members of the tribe of Levi who claim descent from Aaron, the brother of Moses. On their return from the Babylonian Exile to Jerusalem an assembly called the Sanhedrin * regulated all Jewish religious, social and political affairs.

The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin is the supreme Jewish authority on doctrinal and religious matters. It functioned as a government for the first time after the return of the Jews from the Exile. It was the body which condemned Christ to crucifixion. The Sanhedrin has been the officially recognised Jewish authority even during the times when Palestine was occupied by different conquerors, due to the fact that its function was purely religious and affected only the Jews. This state of affairs continued until the first century A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and abolished the Sanhedrin. It has never existed in Jerusalem since that time although the Jews continued to maintain religious assemblies in other towns.

* An Aramaic word used in the Gospels. (Translator's note.)

According to Jewish tradition, the first Sanhedrin goes back to the time of Moses when his followers demanded to return to Egypt.

The ambiguities in the Torah

From the foregoing and in the light of the historical facts, we can now assess the extent of the Torah's ambiguities which attempt to fuse into a single whole three separate periods, and to unite disparate ethnic groups into a single people. The Torah has, therefore, deliberately confused:

— the race of Abraham, consisting of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which in fact goes back to the period of the Canaanites and their god 'El';
— the mixed group which made up the followers of Moses, consisting of Egyptian soldiers, the descendants of the Hyksos, the Habiru and fugitive slaves, all of whom were followers of the 'Adonai' religion, in other words, the Egyptian god 'Aton';
— the Jews as such, who practised the religion of Jehovah and whose scriptures, written by their priests, link them ethnically and historically with Abraham and his period and also with Palestine which Jehovah had promised them.

Long before these archaeological discoveries and historical research, the Koran had observed and pointed out this ambiguity. It makes a clear distinction between the prophets and patriarchs of the period of the children of Israel — such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and their successors — who were always showered with praise, and the Jews of the later period who worshipped a violent, revengeful god, to whom it refers without pleasantness...

The History of the Torah — Its language — Date and place of its composition — The three epochs

In order to throw more light on what we have been saying about the Torah, the date of its appearance and the language in which it was written, we must first of all examine what the Torah means by the term 'the children of Israel'.

The Torah regards the children of Israel as the axis around which the whole of history turns, as if they had existed at all times and in all places and particularly in the time of Abraham; that is to say, not only in the lifetime of Jacob (Israel) but even before his birth in the 19th century B.C. It refers to them as though they existed at the time when Moses led his followers into Sinai and Palestine in the 13th century, 600 years after the death of Jacob. It considers them, finally, to have continued to exist throughout all subsequent ages.

It is regrettable that historians have not given this matter the attention which it deserves, just as it is to be regretted that they have not brought out into the open the three separate epochs in the period which is covered, each of which had its own specific language to distinguish it from the others.

We will, therefore, examine each of these epochs individually in order to show up the anomalies in the Torah more clearly.

The First Epoch

As we have already pointed out, Abraham lived in Mesopotamia in the 19th century B.C. At that time there was only one language in use in the region, the mother-tongue spoken by the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsular

before it became diversified into several dialects such as Canaanite, Aramaic and Hebrew. This was the language used, therefore, by the Aramaic tribes to which Abraham belonged; it was the one used by Jacob, Abraham's grandson and it was probably also used by the children of Israel, at least during their father's lifetime. This Canaanite-Aramaic dialect derived directly from the mother-tongue of this epoch.

According to the Torah, this first epoch ended with the migration of Jacob's family to Egypt in order to join Joseph.

This family subsequently intermingled with the Egyptians and gradually was integrated into the country. It would be against all logic that a small group, or any minority whatsoever, while living in a large community and in a society with solid traditions and a universal civilisation, should preserve its own individuality for six hundred years. Israel could not logically have preserved its identity in Egypt; this is a fact insofar that no archaeological information has been found which could support the opposite theory. We may conclude from this that the role of the children of Israel came to an end with the close of the first epoch.

The Second Epoch

In the 13th century B.C., some six centuries after the patriarchal epoch, came the period of Moses and the departure from Egypt (the Exodus in the Torah and the Old Testament). Moses found himself at the head of a strong group of Hyksos and Egyptians who had remained faithful to the monotheistic faith of Akhenaton. The Pharaoh's death had resulted in the re-establishment of the old religion and the persecution of the worshippers of the One God who were compelled to leave the country.

The authors of the Torah used these emigrants to make them the 'children of Israel', presumed to be the descendants of Joseph and his brothers who had come to Egypt six centuries earlier. To add conviction they made use of a Mesopotamian legend in order to give Moses a genealogy which made him a direct descendant of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob.

But archaeological evidence has weakened this hypothesis by making Moses an Egyptian and a military leader during the reign of Akhenaton and a fervent adherent of his religion. It should be noted in passing that the name Moses was that of several Pharaohs... *

What one knows, historically, of the second epoch, clearly refutes the existence of a link with the patriarchs and thus with the claims in the Torah.

The Torah, furthermore, states that the Ten Commandments of Moses had been given to him by God on Mount Sinai; that they had been carved on stone tablets, stamped with God's seal; that Moses broke the tablets when angered by his people's transgressions; that God later rewrote the Ten Commandments with his own hand and stamped them with his seal; that during the war with the Philistines the Ark of the Covenant containing Moses' laws was captured; that the Ark was later returned to David by the Philistines and installed in the Temple of Solomon; and that, finally, its fate is unknown from that time. **

* The author means that the name Moses is derived from the pharaonic *mose*, which appears in the names of many Pharaohs, such as Totmes ('Tot is born'). Moses likewise, probably had a longer name of which he abandoned the first part (probably an Egyptian name). Cf. the section 'Moses' in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. (Translator's note.)

** "Cursed be the Philistines and cursed be they who have seized the Ark so that we can no longer see the writing and the seal of God."

The Torah also says that when Moses received the Commandments and the Law from God, he wrote them down and gave them to the priests. This could mean that the Law written by Moses was not the same as that written by God himself on the tablets as recounted in the Torah...

The Period after Moses

After Moses' death, the leadership passed to Joshua who defeated several Canaanite kings in Palestine and took over their towns but was unable to take Jerusalem because of its strong defences. The Torah confirms this and admits that Jerusalem was held by the Canaanites, its earliest inhabitants.

The period of Judges followed that of Joshua and it was during this time that Moses' followers had become so weak that they were submerged in the Canaanite population and adopted their polytheistic religion. The Torah even states this. Here then, is further evidence on the inhabitants of Palestine at that time. On several occasions the Torah mentions that Moses' followers had not expelled the Jebusites from Jerusalem or from their territory.

Three centuries after Judges came the period of Kings. When Saul became king he had to submit to the Law. According to the Torah, he was succeeded by David who made Jerusalem his capital and put up a shrine to Jehovah. He was succeeded by Solomon who built the Temple of Jerusalem. (Some experts are of the opinion that Solomon was only an Assyrian subordinate who ruled in the name of his king and that David was a vassal of the Pharaoh...).

In any event, no matter how far back in history we may go, the Jews have never existed as an independent body politic. They have always been a religious body encompassing the adherents of Judaism even though there was no ethnic or racial connection.

After Solomon, the Jews founded two small kingdoms based upon their religion; one, north of Jerusalem has been given the name of Israel by the Torah, and the other, to the south of Jerusalem which was its capital, was called Judah (one of Israel's children). The word 'Jew' derives from this kingdom's name.

The two kingdoms were subsequently attacked by the Assyrians who, after completely crushing the kingdom of Israel and taking the population away into captivity, were satisfied with imposing a heavy tribute on the kingdom of Judah. Soon, however, the Chaldeans defeated the Assyrians, conquered Palestine and took the Jews away into exile in Babylon.

Since that time, the Jews have never been a body politic.

The Koran and the Torah

The Koran was the first to draw attention to the ambiguities, falsehoods and contradictions in the Torah. It was only very much later that historical research and archaeological discoveries have confirmed the statements in the Koran, amongst which are the following:

The Koran has always asserted that the Torah of Mohammed's time (which continues to exist) was not the Torah of Moses. It has also contested the Torah's claim that Abraham and his grandson Jacob were the Jews' ancestors and that the Jewish religion was the same as Abraham's. This is why a verse in the Koran, quoted earlier, says:

"Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian; but he was sound in faith, a Muslim; and not of those who add gods to God."*

*The Koran, III:60.

The Koran also reminds us that Abraham had connections with the Arabian Peninsular where he had build the Kaaba. Hence the meaning of the Koranic verse which says: "And remember when we appointed the Holy House as man's resort and safe retreat, and said, 'Take ye the station of Abraham for a place of prayer:' And we commanded Abraham and Ismael, 'Purify my house for those who shall go in procession round it, and those who shall abide there for devotion, and those who shall bow down and prostrate themselves."

"And when Abraham said, 'Lord! make this secure land, and supply its people with fruits, such of them as believe in God and in the last day:' He said, 'And whoso believeth not, for a little while will I bestow good things on him; then will I drive him to the torment of the Fire!' An ill passage!"*

This piece of evidence linking Abraham's origin with the Arabian Peninsular and particularly with the Hejaz (although he was not born there), has been confirmed by the archaeological finds on the migrations between Arabia and the Fertile Crescent, as well as by comparative language studies.

The Koran also tells us that the Jewish religion in Moses' time believed in the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgement, the balancing of accounts and the existence of Paradise and Hell. Yet the current version of the Old Testament makes no mention of the Last Day nor of the joys or sufferings of the next life. This is further evidence that the Jewish version of the Torah is not that of Moses and at the same time completely undermines the Jewish claim of religious and family ties with Moses and his people.

*The Koran, II: 119-120.

The Ibrani (Hebraic) Language

With the passage of time, Moses' followers were influenced by Canaanite customs and culture and lost their specific characteristics. They borrowed the letters of the Phoenician alphabet, used by the Canaanites at that time, and employed it until later changing to the Samaritan script.

The Hebraic language adopted subsequently by the Jews is a dialect derived from Aramaic, and it was only six hundred years after Moses' followers had arrived in Palestine that they began to use it. They wrote the Torah during the Babylonian Exile in this Hebraic language derived from Aramaic, eight hundred years after Moses' period.

Excavations carried out near Hebron by the Israelis have uncovered manuscripts going back to 700 B.C. and written in the language of the Palestinian inhabitants. This proves that the Jewish Hebraic language is more recent than Arab Hebraic; that the former was only used by a minority and that the language of the majority of Palestine's inhabitants was the native language and at the same time, the oldest in use in the area.

This is more historical evidence that the main language of Palestine was that of the indigenous population and that the Hebraic language of the Jews (Ibri) was that of a foreign minority of migrants into the country.

It is relevant to recall what we said previously, namely that the word 'ubru' or 'habiru' was the description given to a large number of Arab tribes to the north of the Arabian Peninsular and in the Syrian desert around the second millenium B.C. A considerable number of ancient inscriptions going back tens of centuries before the appearance of the Jews refer to the nomadic character of these tribes. Excava-

tions have revealed that these 'habiru' had succeeded in occupying the town of Jericho some 200 years before Moses' period. The Torah itself also recognises that the 'ubru' (Hebrews) were not Jews.

Some people think that the word 'arabi' comes from 'ibri' through a changing of the letters. However this may be, the term describes the Arab desert tribes who are the purest type of Arab.

There is therefore, no plausible reason why the Jews should be called Ibrani (Hebrews). On the other hand, when the Torah applies the name to Abraham it is, wittingly or unwittingly, stating a historical fact because the patriarch belonged to a nomadic Aramaean tribe (khabiro or abiro).

The Third Epoch

The third epoch began in the 6th century B.C. and is that of the Jews proper, that is to say, of those who were called this because they belonged to the kingdom of Judah which subsequently disappeared.

It was during this time that the characteristic Jewish religion came into being together with the writing of the Torah which unified Jewish law and codified it into one book.

The Jews began to practise the ceremonies of their religion from the beginning of their Babylonian exile and it was there that the Torah was written. A language known as 'Torah Aramaic' was employed and, as already mentioned, used 'square' letters as characters borrowed from one of the oldest Aramaic forms of writing. It is to the Jews' merit that they have preserved this form of writing which is also known as 'square Assyrian script'.

The objective of the Babylonian Torah's authors (the priests and doctors of law) was, through their religion, to

give the Jews a feeling of superiority over other peoples. They also took great liberties with history by adding a number of legends and miraculous events to glorify the Jewish people and give it the conviction that despite its ordeals and tribulations it was the 'chosen people' whom Jehovah would not abandon.

In order to reinforce this idea and ingrain it deeply into the consciousness (and even into the unconscious) of their co-religionists, they made up a claim of lineage from an ancestral tree which would be universally recognised for its worth and virtues. The illustrious family of the patriarchs — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the 'children of Israel' — enjoyed such a high reputation for sanctity and divine protection in Arabia and the Fertile Crescent, that no other family tree could be more respectable or sought after. The Torah's authors traced the Jewish ancestry as far back as this and added Moses as the connecting link. *

As far as the idea of the 'Promised Land' is concerned and which has been made into an article of faith, the Jewish authors improperly attributed it to their imaginary ancestors; and yet there has never been any historical reference to it before the Torah was written.

Another Look at the Torah

When we come to look at the historical content of the Torah we find that a number of the stories, events and legends which it contains were already widely known in ancient times and had either been taken from the culture of Palestine in which the Jews lived, or from the influences

* This is a classic literary procedure: in order to please Augustus and reinforce Roman national consciousness, Virgil, in the Aeneid, made Aeneas, prince of Troy, their ancestor, thereby linking them with the Homeric heroes. (Translator's note.)

they experienced in Babylon, or, in addition, from the knowledge coming to them from Egypt.

The Jews, therefore, wrote the Torah in the light of their knowledge at the time (6th century B.C.), introducing into it a number of new elements designed to prove their superiority over other peoples. They went so far as to claim — in order to give greater weight and impact to their work — that it was a complete recapitulation of the Torah of Moses; and that although the latter had been lost they had, by oral transmission, kept it in existence from the 13th to the 6th century...

Nevertheless, experts were well aware that the rewritten Torah, incorrectly attributed to Moses, had all the signs of being untrue. They brought a number of errors and contradictions to light. The Koran had already pre-empted their comments on this subject when it said:

"...Yet a part of them heard the word of God, and then, after they had understood it, perverted it, and knew that they did so."*

According to Moujahed, in the *Majmaa El Bayane* explaining the Koran, the term 'word' used in this verse means the Torah.

Another verse of the Koran says: "...Woe to those who with their own hands transcribe the Book corruptly, and then say, 'This is from God,' that they may sell it for some mean price! Woe then to them for that which their hands have written! and, Woe to them for the gains which they have made!"**

Commentators say that this is a reference to the Jews.

The erudite Jew, Silver, states that the current Torah corresponds in no way with Moses' original; and that even the

*The Koran, II:70

**Idem, II:73

Ten Commandments, which many scholars consider to be the only part which remains of the original Torah, are not in the same form or with the same content.

Let us add that historians, experts and archaeologists, in the light of the inscriptions which have been found, all confirm that the events in the Torah do not correspond with historical facts and that the Torah is more a collection of legends than a history in which any confidence can be placed.

One also knows that the Torah (and the Old Testament) recounts the numerous offences and ignominious behaviour of important people — kings, prophets and patriarchs — and gives some examples as well.

There was Lot who committed incest, when drunk, with his two daughters; there was David who seduced Uriah's wife and arranged for him to be killed in an ambush; there was David's son Amnon who committed incest with his sister Tamar and subsequently had her shamefully driven away. There are accounts of many other acts which sinned against morality and starting with the one laid down by the Ten Commandments. This is yet further evidence that the rewritten Torah is not that of Moses.

Commentators on the Old Testament have become well aware of these contradictions and of the suspect modifications which the scribes and doctors of law had carried out to the original Torah (insofar as they had been able to remember it...). One reads, therefore, in the preface to the Bible printed in Beirut, the following: "There is no contemporary Catholic scholar who believes that Moses himself wrote the entire Pentateuch, beginning with the Creation up until the manifestation of his power...". Also: "It should be emphasised that Mosaic law progressively increased as new social and religious situations appeared in later centuries." After many centuries of belief in the complete authenticity

of the Old Testament, Christian and Muslim scholars began to have serious doubts about its attribution to Moses.

From the historical point of view, the worship of One God by the Jews had been preceded by Abraham and then by Akhenaton whose doctrine Moses maintained and passed on. Thirteen centuries after Abraham and eight centuries after Moses, the Jews proclaimed the worship of Jehovah, endowing him with characteristics which made him into a completely different form of God. The God of Abraham and of Moses was universal and his rule was to usher in love, concord and justice amongst mankind. Jehovah is a God who discriminates, who has a 'chosen people' to whom arbitrary preference is given no matter what the moral worth and piety of other peoples may be. *

The authors of the Torah of the Exile were indeed men of great culture, scholars of wide knowledge and poets with powerful imaginations. Brilliance would not have been enough, genius was required, and they had it to the extent that their joint work was accepted, without difficulty, as the rewriting of the Book as revealed to Moses — who was the first to proclaim the religion of One God, put forward a theory for the creation of the Universe and a system of ethics with a theological foundation and to give an account of the history of the prophets.

This acceptance remained unchallenged — amongst Jews and non-Jews — until fairly recently when scientific studies based upon archaeological discoveries contested the propositions which up until then, for lack of valid arguments, had hardly ever been questioned. The contents and chronology of the Torah came under severe criticism from

* It needed the coming of Christ and Mohammed to introduce a universal One God, to abolish caste privilege and to emphasise the sanctity and goodness of men whatever their origin, status or colour. (Translator's note.)

which they did not emerge unscathed. The similarity of its accounts with much older legends was brought out into the open and it was demonstrated that the Torah's authors had drawn freely upon the traditions of their environment and on events which they had either witnessed or heard about. Add to this the fact that they had to restore the confidence of an exiled people under ordeal with the hope of a future return to the 'Promised Land', and in order to do so had to glorify the national pride. As a result, one has a rational scientific explanation of how a great poem was composed and which has lost none of its worth with the exception that it no longer has its holy mystic character with which the priests and doctors of law have, for reasons which are easy to understand, never ceased to clothe it.

The Jews and the belief in One God

Since the Torah was the first book to give an account of the events, facts and legends of antiquity and to call for the worship of One God, it was usually conceded, before the recent discoveries, that the Jews had been the first to believe in a divine unity. It was a subject which had hardly been discussed and, because of the dearth of knowledge on the history of the Middle East, this idea had become so firmly fixed in people's minds that nobody asked himself what the beliefs of Noah and the patriarchs had been and if there had really been no one before the Jews who believed in a divine unity...

Nowadays, archaeological discoveries have revealed astonishing information on the belief in One God, long before the appearance of the Jewish religion and the writing of the Torah.

There are other facts which confirm that One God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, was in vogue amongst the Canaanites

and the Arabs at a certain period, although they had their specific conception of it. The Torah itself also records that when the Canaanites sent their prophet Balaam (who believed in One God) to curse Moses' followers, God inspired him not to do so. Is this not additional proof that the Canaanites (who were Arabs) believed in One God?

As far as the Egyptian Pharaoh, Akhenaton is concerned, his reign is a clear enough refutation of the claim that the Torah was the first to proclaim the worship of One God.

Akhenaton and the call for divine unity

There is no doubt — and the dates are there to confirm it — that Moses' followers adopted the Akhenaton doctrine of belief in One God who differed from the Jehovah of the Torah in that he was universal and not special to an individual group of people.

Archaeological discoveries indicate that this monotheistic cult evolved over a long period of time from sun worship. In antiquity the sun was the supreme giver of life; little by little the sun became the symbol of the One God, Aton, the creator of all things. When the Pharaoh adopted this belief and imposed it on his people around 1360 B.C., he changed his name from Amenotep IV to Akhenaton meaning "He who is pleasing to Aton".

The chronicles of his reign reveal that he was opposed to all forms of magic and sorcery. He forbade artists to depict the face of Aton because "God has no face and cannot be either seen or touched, yet he is always there and in every place". This was Akhenaton's religion and it has been said that: "Never before him had mankind had a universal spiritual concept of such a high degree".

The belief in One God was, however, obliterated after the

death of Akhenaton and his followers were persecuted. They became a 'heretic minority' which finally had to leave Egypt under Moses' leadership to seek refuge in the land of Canaan.

The languages in use during the epochs of the belief in One God

We have already identified three separate epochs:

a) that of Abraham and his grandsons in the 19th and 18th centuries B.C.;
b) that of Moses and his followers in the 13th century B.C.;
c) that of the Jews which begins in the 6th century B.C.

From historical evidence we know what languages were in use during each of these epochs and this is further proof of the separate character of each of them and their differences not only from the ethnic point of view but also in their cultures and traditions.

They were:

— the Arab-Semitic mother-tongue, the dominant language of Abraham's time;
— the Egyptian language (in which the lost Torah was written) was the dominant one in Moses' period;
— during the Jewish period it was an Aramaic dialect, known as the 'Aramaic dialect of the Torah' since it was used for the writing of the Torah.

War and Peace

Freud says that the God of Moses and Akhenaton was none other than Adonis, the Phoenician god, with a name which is not so far removed from Aton. As time passed, the Aton cult may have gradually been supplanted by that of Jehovah, originally god of the volcanoes whose violent,

jealous and vengeful nature gradually took the place of the grace of the Egyptian god.

In any case, the commandments of Jehovah as recorded in the Torah seem sometimes to be extremely cruel and savage. The massacre of women, children, old people and even animals is recorded in Exodus and the Book of Joshua. For example, at the fall of Jericho, it says: "They took the town and destroyed it by killing with the sword all that they found: men, women, children, old people, even the cattle, sheep and asses." (Joshua 6 : 21). The Law on warfare (Deuteronomy 20 : 16) lays down: "As for the cities which the Lord your God has delivered into your hands, you should not allow any living thing to survive."

The instructions in the Torah* given to Moses and his people by God said: "Kill every male child and kill every woman who has known a man by sleeping with him." (Numbers, 17).

"Take care to make friends with the inhabitants of the country through which you have to pass so that they do not set a trap for you." (Exodus, 34 : 12).

In Exodus, Jehovah himself proposes deceit and theft: "Each woman should ask her neighbour and each person living in her house for vessels of silver and gold and for clothes which you should put upon your sons and daughters. And you shall despoil the Egyptians." (Exodus 3 : 22). "The children of Israel did what Moses had commanded and asked the Egyptians for vessels of silver and

* It should be realised that the Torah (or the Old Testament) is above all else a poem, an epic poem which, like the Iliad, the Aeneid and the Song of Roland, made use of the atrocities it recounts in order to produce an effect of horror, similar to our 'horror films'. There is, however, a difference between epic literature and the Torah in that the latter is presented as God's word (or his inspiration) and that for a long time it was impossible to regard it as a moral tale or literary exaggeration.

gold and for clothes. The Eternal God made the people find favour in the eyes of the Egyptians who acceded to their demands. And they despoiled the Egyptians." (Exodus 12:35-36)*. The teachings of Islam and Christianity do not condone these sort of actions either in peace or war. The Koran itself warned the Jews against committing these acts:

"For this cause have we ordained to the children of Israel that he who slayeth any one, unless it be a person guilty of manslaughter, or of spreading disorders in the land, shall be as though he had slain all mankind..."** The treatment of enemies in Islam is set out in the following verse of the Koran: "God will, perhaps, establish good will between yourselves and those of them whom ye take to be your enemies: God is Powerful: and God is Gracious, Merciful." "God doth not forbid you to deal with kindness and fairness toward those who have not made war upon you on account of your religion, or driven you forth from your homes: for God loveth those who act with fairness."***

The Gospel also proclaims universal love: "... Make every effort to join your faith with virtue, with virtue to knowledge, with knowledge to self-discipline, with self-discipline to patience, with patience to piety, with piety to brotherhood, with brotherhood to love." (Second Epistle of St. Peter, 1:5-7.)****

*The Odyssey also records tricks which are no more edifying; but the Homeric poems do not claim to be a moral code, and when the gods get involved in mortals' affairs they do so in anthropomorphic form which the authors of the Torah took great care to prevent their Jehovah from being so involved! (Translator's note).

** The Koran, V:35

*** Idem, LX:7-8

****"You have heard what has been said: You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say unto you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew, 5:43-44.)

The Talmud

Talmud is the Hebrew word for 'The Teaching'. It is a book which contains instructions, explanations and commentaries on the Torah. According to Jewish tradition, these go back to the time of Moses who passed them verbally to his people; they were also passed on by Aaron, Elijah and Joshua to the prophets who in turn passed them on to the Sanhedrin.

To the majority of Jews the Talmud, like the Torah, is a sacred book. The only difference between them is that the Torah was given to Moses in written form whereas the Talmud was transmitted verbally, based upon his own words.

In the 3rd century A.D., sixteen centuries after Moses, the doctors of the Law in Palestine collated the text and the commentaries. When the Jews, following their harassment by the Romans, no longer felt secure in Palestine, their religious leaders moved to Mesopotamia to settle in the vicinity of Anbar on the banks of the Euphrates thanks to the complete religious tolerance which prevailed there. It was not long before they established their own schools of religion, their institutions, synagogues and cemeteries. While in Mesopotamia they completed the exegesis and commentaries on the Talmud by adding several chapters, and this continued until the end of the 5th century A.D.

They stayed in Mesopotamia for eight centuries with complete freedom for their educational, religious and scientific activities. In the 11th century, Caliph El Kader Billah closed their schools and restricted their activities, so they moved their headquarters to Andalusia where they founded a very famous school at Cordoba.

Some information on the Talmud's contents

The main purpose of the Talmud was to codify the *Oral Law* as the complement to the *Written Law* of the Torah; one therefore finds in it the confirmation of the Torah's teachings, beginning with that of the 'chosen people'. In order to minimise any attempts at assimilation by the communities of the diaspora, which were minority groups within many different nations, it reiterates on several occasions, the fact of the superiority of the Jewish race with whom Jehovah had made an agreement promising power and wealth. (This racial exclusivity ignores, wittingly or otherwise, the long period during which conversion to Judaism was allowed and was not a change of race but of religion.)

In order to stimulate the Jewish people's abilities, the Talmud urges them to be constantly on the alert and even aggressive towards other nations. In particular they should oppose any attempts at supremacy on their part so as not to lose the personality and inheritance promised by Jehovah...

The Talmud contains some violent and often scurrilous attacks on the Christians, which led to its being banned in the West at the end of the Middle Ages. Its ambiguous moral values and the tendentiousness of its interpretations (especially affecting relations with non-Jews) were also stigmatised and condemned.

The doctrinal part of the Talmud, *the Mishna**, finalised in the 3rd century A.D. is made up of the following six parts:

1. The sowings (Zeraim), concerned with agriculture but also with the blessings and the liturgy.

* The Hebrew name of each part is given in brackets. (Translator's note.)

2. Feasts (Moed), the observance and celebration of sabbaths and other religious days.
3. Women (Nashim), dealing with engagements, marriage, divorce, suckling and legacies.
4. Damages (Nezikin), civil and criminal law (and a list of moral maxims).
5. Religious subjects (Kodashim), which lays down the rules for offerings, sacrifices and ritual slaughter.
6. Purifications (Tohoroth) in which various rules of hygiene and purification are laid down and commented upon.

Each part consists of a number of dissertations, subdivided into chapters and paragraphs.

For many centuries the Talmud * was almost unknown to non-Jews; the few copies to be found in the synagogues were only used by those rabbis with a sound knowledge of Hebrew. Incomplete copies began to circulate during the 13th century and aroused the anger of the Catholic Church and its associated Universities. Solemn debates took place in public after which the confiscated copies of the Torah were burned, as in Paris in 1240.

The German humanists, especially Reuchlin (1455-1522), partially rehabilitated the Hebraic books and taxed their ingenuity to make them more understandable while at the same time, condemning the offensive references to Christianity. A meeting of the Sanhedrin in Poland in the 17th century finally took the initiative in expunging all the

* The Talmud of Jerusalem and the Talmud of Babylon, the two original versions, were first printed in Venice between 1520 and 1524. The Jerusalem Talmud has been translated into French, but that of Babylon (which is much more comprehensive) has only been fully translated into German and English (thirty-six volumes). There is also a partial translation into Arabic. (Translator's note.)

offensive content of the Talmud referring to other nations and religions. The book still, however, preserves its tone of defiance and contempt for non-Jews as well as its basic moral principles which are often contrary to the legal principles of other nations.

The Torah and archaeological discoveries

The historical events recorded in the Torah — as well as the individuals and nations mentioned — come, as we have seen, from stories which antedate its composition and upon which its authors drew freely. They also borrowed the legal systems of other peoples, modified them to suit Jewish requirements and presented them as the inspiration of God.

The archaeological discoveries of the 19th and especially of our own century, together with the progress made in deciphering ancient scripts have provided us with much more accurate information on the ancient civilisations of the Middle East and the frequent adoption in the Torah of their legends, annals and legislation. It is clear from this that the Torah (or the Bible as one prefers) was not the first book to give the story of the Creation and the Flood nor the first to have promulgated laws.

Flagrant contradictions and anachronisms occur which are not all involuntary. For example, the Torah states (Genesis, 21 and 26) that Abraham and his son Isaac went to live at Gerar in the land of Abimelec, king of the Philistines. But archaeological research has established that Abraham lived in the 19th century B.C. and that the Philistines did not appear until the 12th century B.C., seven hundred years after Abraham's period. How then could Abraham have met the Philistine king in his own territory? Has not the Torah deliberately confused the two periods in order to link the Jews with Abraham's lineage?

Let us give another example: when referring to Abraham, who died in the 19th century, the Torah describes Ur as a Chaldean town. But the Chaldeans did not appear until the beginning of the 7th century after the fall of Nineveh. The reason is that the Jews wanted it to be believed that when Abraham left Ur to go to Palestine he went with the Jews whereas they did not make their appearance until well after the period of Moses, more than a thousand years after Abraham.

By their failure to examine closely the Torah's statements theologians and historians have been misled by the sacred character given to it by the Jews in their anxiety to claim that it was the Torah of Moses. Their error was so total that they considered names in the Torah such as Abram (Abraham), Jacob, Joseph, Jerusalem, Zion and Israel as being Hebraic, whereas recent archaeological discoveries make it clear that all these names are of Arab origin used by the Canaanites and recorded in Canaanite and Egyptian inscriptions which antedate the appearance of the Hebraic language (in the meaning that the Jews give it).

Finally, in their hostility towards the Canaanites the Jews deny their Semitic origin, allegations which have been refuted by archaeological discoveries.

The most important discoveries

Following the excavations and archaeological discoveries concerning the Sumerians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Hittites and Egyptians, it is now possible for us:

1. To pinpoint the positions of most of the towns mentioned in the Torah.
2. To determine the periods when the Semitic peoples left the Arabian Peninsular for the Fertile Crescent.

3. To determine the dates of historical events and the relationships between different peoples.
4. To establish the fact that a great number of the accounts, legends and legal prescriptions found in the Torah originate from ancient sources in the Sumerian, Akkadian, Canaanite, Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian periods from which the Jewish religion more or less drew its ideas and its form. This goes to prove that the Jews had neither a specific culture nor original literature nor their own legislation, in contradiction with the claims of the Torah and the universal view which held the Bible to have been the creator of all institutions, the source of all religions and the first to have called for the belief in One God.
5. To confirm that the Jews were foreigners — even intruders — in Palestine and that all their culture — including their language and their Holy Book — has been borrowed from the Canaanite and Aramaean cultures which are of Arab Semite origin; and that all the historical names mentioned in the Torah, whether of people or places, are of Canaanite-Arab origin going back two thousand years before the appearance of the Hebraic language.
6. To confirm that the Jews had always been a minority group amongst the local inhabitants of Palestine during the whole of their sojourn there, even in the time of David and Solomon and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (and even more so in the time of Moses' followers).
7. To establish that in all periods of their history the Jews were unable to found a civil, temporal State in the true sense, which covered the whole of Palestine; and even that of David and Solomon in the 10th century B.C. was on Canaanite foundations and before the appearance of Judaism.

8. To confirm that the contents of Genesis, with a few differences, have been borrowed from the Babylonians, and that the story in the Torah has a striking similarity with the Babylonian text and that there are almost identical legends saying that the Heavens and the Earth were created out of the water.
9. To confirm the striking similarity between Jewish beliefs and those of the Sumerians and Babylonians on the subjects of the afterlife and the resurrection of the dead.

It is, therefore, difficult to regard the Jews as being originators or creators when in the presence of so much archaeological evidence going back to periods before Judaism became a historical fact.

Resemblances and Similarities

There are even more striking resemblances and similarities than those which we have mentioned. Recent discoveries reveal that the story of Adam and Eve, including a description of the Garden of Eden, is an ancient legend going back to a period long before the Torah; that the story of the earthly Paradise in the Torah dates back to the Sumerian period, and that the story of Cain and Abel is in a Sumerian legend.

The story of the Flood, too, is very similar to certain Sumerian and Babylonian inscriptions recording that a catastrophic flood covered the whole of Mesopotamia.

There are ancient Egyptian inscriptions of 'The story of two brothers' which, in several respects, is similar to that of Joseph and the wife of Potiphar.

Lastly, from excavations in the southern part of the Akkadian region in Iraq, inscriptions have been found of a story similar to that of the birth and childhood of Moses.

And there are many other resemblances which could be mentioned. *

Jewish law and archaeological discoveries

Archaeological excavations have shown that the law of the Torah, claimed to have been the first in the world, has, in fact, taken much of its material from the Code of Hammurabi and other ancient laws. Many of the hymns, psalms and songs of praise in the Torah are taken from the Canaanite and Egyptian religions and most of the Jewish ceremonies were previously those of the Canaanites and Babylonians which were imitated and recorded in their books as if they had been the original authors. Finally, the differences of detail between Jewish law and those of Hammurabi and the Egyptians are due to the different situations and interests which led the Jews to introduce several modifications and additions to coincide with their own objectives.

A comparison of the Jewish law with the Code of Hammurabi reveals a surprising similarity, to the extent that one can state without any doubt that a good number of the principles of Judaic law have been taken, with minor changes, from the laws of Hammurabi. The following points of justice seem to confirm this:

a) An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.
b) The punishment for theft from a freeman was slavery and being sold into slavery; one difference is that Judaic law does not inflict this punishment on an Israelite who steals but only on the non-Israelite.

* One should be careful not to be confused by the fact that the Koran contains similar stories. The difference is that the Koran never claimed to be the first to tell these stories as the Torah has done. In the Koran they are used as examples, instruction or for preaching purposes.

c) The reverence to parents has been taken by Judaism from the law of Hammurabi.
d) Adultery and rape are forbidden by both the Torah and the Code of Hammurabi; the Torah, however, adds the prohibition of homosexuality.
e) Theft and pillage are similarly forbidden by the Torah and the Code of Hammurabi.
f) The false accusation of the woman for committing adultery.
g) False accusation and false witness.
h) The practice of sorcery is prohibited by both Judaic law and the law of Hammurabi.
i) The sale into slavery of members of the family in payment of debts. The reduction to slavery of one Jew by another is prohibited in the Torah by Jehovah, in saying: "If your brother (a Jew) is insolvent and has been sold to you as a slave you shall not treat him as a slave but as an employee and a guest... because the Jews are my slaves and I did not bring them out of Egypt to be sold as slaves. Do not treat them with violence. Your slaves should be taken from other peoples."
j) Usury is forbidden by both systems with the exception in the Torah that it is only forbidden between Jews and not between a Jew and a non-Jew.
k) Payment of damages is incorporated in both systems.
l) Polygamy is permitted by both.

It is easy to explain the close similarity between the Jewish and Babylonian judicial texts. While in captivity in Babylon the writers of the Torah studied the law of Hammurabi and took whatever suited them from it while adding whatever was most relevant to their own society and the combating of its vices — all with the objective of demonstrating the superiority of their people as those who

had been chosen by God. The only difference between the law of Hammurabi and Judaic law is that the former was ordinary civil law whereas the latter has a religious connotation through which God and the priests have a say in civil or criminal affairs.

The conclusion, on the one hand, is that the law of the Torah, influenced by Hammurabi's and other ancient codes, is not the law of Moses — which was restricted to the ten commandments addressed to all mankind and not just to the Jews — and on the other, that the Jews did not attempt to devise their own jurisprudence but made use of that of other nations, sometimes word for word.

It is most unfortunate that the true origins of Jewish law remained unknown for so long and that so many people still consider the Torah to be a complete revelation. When confronted with the archaeological evidence on papyrus, stone and clay tablets they say that this only goes to corroborate the Torah without taking the trouble to ask which is the older document and consequently which was the inspiration for the other.

As far as the dates, places, stories and events in the Torah are concerned, archaeological discoveries have established that they are in conflict with historical facts; there is no doubt but that future discoveries will be even more eloquent on this subject.

We have established therefore that:

— the period of Abraham is quite different from that of Moses, which in turn is quite different from that of Judaism, and that there is no ethnic, religious or linguistic link between the three;
— the God whose worship was preached by Abraham and Moses was not the same as the Jewish Jehovah;
— the Jews, whether they are considered to be the descendants of Moses' followers or as a mixture of people con-

nected through their religion, have never possessed anything in Palestine — in antiquity and after Islam — which justifies their claim that Palestine is their homeland;

— even if one agrees that they were the descendants of Israel and that Abraham was their ancestor, the Torah itself says that Abraham and his sons were transitory in Palestine because they were Mesopotamian by birth and of Aramaean origin and language;

— this is all confirmed by archaeological discoveries, modern scholarship and is set out in detail in the book entitled *The Arabs and Jews in History* of which we have here made a short summary.

We have seen in this historical survey that the Jews were only a small foreign minority in Palestine, swamped under the mass of the local inhabitants. We can also observe that all to which they can lay claim in Palestine were the Temple and Palace of Jerusalem — inasmuch as Solomon was a Jew as the Torah states. Both of these buildings, however, have completely disappeared...

As far as the sepulchral vaults of the patriarchs at Khalil (Hebron) are concerned there is no ethnic or religious connection with the Jews; this is proved by the documented archaeological evidence which shows that the country remained Arab Semitic from Antiquity up until the Islamic conquest. The historical monuments which exist within Jerusalem and Palestine are either of Christian or Muslim origin. The archaeological evidence on the period confirms, furthermore, that everything connected with the local inhabitants is of Jebusite or Canaanite origin.

Neither ancient nor modern history reveal any traces of the Jews in Palestine to prove that they were a political entity; all one can say is that they existed at a fairly recent period as a religious group which had taken its sources

from the Canaanites, Babylonians and Aramaeans and does not even have the distinction of having the first revealed religion, inasmuch that it is a fact that the Torah was written by the priests themselves.

PART THREE

Zionism, Zionists and the "Promised Land"

Zionism, Zionists and the "Promised Land"

It was while the Torah was being written during the Babylonian captivity (597-538 B.C.) that the idea of the 'Promised Land' was born. The intention was to buoy up the hope of a return to Palestine and to stimulate this desire amongst the Jewish community. *

It was not long before it became dogma and was firmly fixed in people's minds. When the exile came to an end and some returned to Palestine, the Jews saw it as the fulfilment of the divine promise.

It remained a purely religious idea until it was transformed into a political concept through the activities of an organisation in Russia during the second half of the 19th century. Based on the religious belief, the new organisation stated that the Jews had the right to claim Palestine as their homeland and the duty to return there because the land had been promised to them by God. This aggressive political concept became known as Zionism, after the hill of Zion in Jerusalem. Long before the arrival of Moses and his fol-

* "May my right hand be paralysed if I forget thee, Jerusalem! May my tongue cleave to my palate if I do not preserve thy memory, and if I do not put Jerusalem in the forefront of my joys!" Psalm 137:5-6 (Translator's note.)

lowers the hill had been fortified by the Jebusites, cousins of the Canaanites who had built and settled in the town of Jerusalem. David built his palace there and Solomon constructed the Temple nearby. But, as we have seen already, Zion, with its Canaanite name, has nothing specifically Jewish...

Zionism* is a political and racist movement. Its founders used the idea of the 'Promised Land' to demand the creation in Palestine of 'a Jewish national home', alleging that the Jews had historical rights to the country. The movement found some support from the colonialist countries, especially Great Britain, who saw in it a way for parcelling out the Ottoman Empire and creating a kind of barrier between Asia and Africa which would be under their control.

The first Zionist congress, held behind closed doors, took place in Basel (Switzerland) in 1897, under the presidency of Theodore Herzl, its leading personality. The Zionist World Congress started at the beginning of the 20th century and soon established, in every country, cells in which the great financial trusts connected with the imperialist monopolies formed a part.

The Objectives of the Congress of Basel

The account of the Basel Congress, which aroused strong criticism, in particular that of sowing dissension between peoples and refuting humanitarian principles, is extremely complicated. It filled the front pages of the major world newspapers especially after the publication — clearly apocryphal — of the notorious "Protocol of the Wise Men of Zion". The secrecy of the meetings gave rise to all kinds

*Its 'charter' was the book by Theodore Herzl entitled 'The Jewish State', published in 1895. (Translator's note.)

of speculation. Nonetheless, the following main guidelines seem to have been discussed and agreed upon:

1. The need to begin colonising Palestine with agricultural and industrial workers in whichever manner was most appropriate.
2. The need to reorganise world Jewry in local or international associations while respecting the law in each country.
3. The reinforcement of the feeling and the idea of Jewish nationality.
4. The taking of the necessary steps to obtain government permission for the realisation of Zionism's aims.

The congress also decided to use Hebrew as the language of communication between Jews in every country, and in accordance with this decision, to develop a modern form of Hebrew.

Over the years the Zionist movement became more and more an imperialist political plan. Its leaders began to negotiate with certain of the great powers and to make agreements which were detrimental to the interests of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine whether Muslim or Christian.

Great Britain and Zionism

Great Britain found in the Zionist movement one of its most effective instruments for carrying out its imperialist designs. The fact that the country was the leading colonial power, had important interests in Palestine and had an influential Jewish minority at home, some of whom were members of Parliament or the House of Lords and Ministers in the government (even, like Disraeli, Prime Minister), encouraged the Jews to press their demands for the creation of a homeland in Palestine as Jehovah had promised.

The Report of the Campbell-Bannerman Colonial Commission

The reader of the Campbell-Bannerman report can see the steps which were being taken by British imperialism at the beginning of the 20th century. Sir Campbell-Bannerman became Prime Minister in 1905 and set up a commission consisting of historians, legal and political experts from several countries, but mainly British, to examine the best methods to be adopted for consolidating colonialism in Asia and Africa.

The thorough investigation went on for one year and the Commission presented its Report to the Foreign Minister who passed it on to the Minister for the Colonies for implementation.

Amongst its recommendations, this secret report proposed the setting up of a barrier in Palestine and Sinai to separate Africa from Asia. In it one may read the following:

"It is essential to separate the African part of this area from the Asian. The commission recommends the setting up of a human barrier which would be powerful and alien to occupy the land bridge joining Asia to Africa; it would be in the vicinity of the Suez Canal and, at the same time, friendly towards imperialism and hostile to the local populations."

Who better than the Jews could be this 'alien' power which would be 'hostile to the local populations'? The report does not mention them specifically, perhaps out of prudence. But Winston Churchill (who was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Campbell-Bannerman cabinet) wrote later in his *Memoirs*:

"If in our lifetime we should see the birth of a Jewish State (an event which will definitely occur), which includes

not only Palestine but also both banks of the Jordan, which will be under the protection of the British Crown with a population of between three and four million Jews, then we will have seen something which is in perfect harmony with the vital interests of the Empire."

Needless to say the Campbell-Bannerman report and the imperialist policy behind it stimulated enthusiasm in Zionist circles and helped to bring about their own agreement on Palestine as the future 'Jewish national home'.* Intensive propaganda was aimed at convincing the great powers of the period — and the Jews themselves — of the need for 'the return to the Promised Land' and the need for urgency in solving a 'thousand year old problem...'

The First World War and the events in the Middle East favoured the cause of the Zionists who were able, in 1917, to obtain from Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, the famous declaration which bears his name and promised the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The Allied victory over the Central Powers enabled Great Britain, through the Mandate she obtained after the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, to carry through the plan for an 'imperialist barrier' by sponsoring the return of Jews and the establishment of Jewish colonies in Palestine.

The creation of the State of Israel

Both the Muslim and Christian inhabitants of Palestine were opposed to the Zionist movement and to the steady flow of immigrants who came in successive groups mainly from eastern Europe. They set up clandestine organisations

* In the beginning serious consideration was being given to Uganda as well as the possibility of Angola, the Argentine and even Cyprus. (Translator's note.)

and armed bands in order to be ready to attack when the British Mandate came to an end. In spite of all their efforts Arab resistance was inadequate, partly because of the support given to the Zionist movement by Great Britain and partly because of the arrival in Palestine of politically and militarily organised units. (They were groups whose 'leaders' of that time today govern the State of Israel and in their positions as deputies, ministers or party leaders map out the political and strategic plans for the struggle against the Arab nation.)

The mandatory government which was supposed to control the flow of immigrants, allowed them to come in in large groups. To maintain appearances, some refugees were turned away mainly to Cyprus; but they got back to Palestine at the first opportunity! The number of clandestine immigrants increased considerably and were in addition to those who had entered legally. These alien groups in Palestine got themselves ready for the first opportunity to establish the State of Israel in the 'Promised Land'. On several occasions bloody conflicts and skirmishes took place between them and the local inhabitants which went on until the day of the outbreak of the Second World War.

During the war, Chaim Weizman, one of the important leaders of the Zionist movement, succeeded in persuading the British government to create a Jewish Brigade to fight beside the Allies. When it came into existence it enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. It even had its own flag which subsequently became that of the State of Israel. The brigade fought with the English and became the nucleus of the Israeli army which at the end of the British Mandate and the establishment of the State of Israel, seized Palestine and occupied by force a country which had been Arab from the most remote periods of antiquity.

The Zionist leaders, after the Second World War, foresaw the eclipse of Great Britain and the break-up of the huge Empire, and hastened to strengthen their political links with the United States. Zionism used every effort and possible manœuvre to win over the sympathies of a number of American States and to obtain solid support in Congress. By 1944 the Zionists could rely on the support of several States and their influence increased to the extent that they were able to influence certain American decisions, and even federal elections.

It is thanks to imperialism's support that the State of Israel came into existence, but also, it must be said, because of the lethargy of the majority of Arabs. Israel even extended its propaganda into the Arab States and saw to it that no opportunity was missed for taking over Arab land, step by step, either by political or military means in order to realise its aim of enlarging its control over the greatest amount of territory that it could.

It would be unfair not to recall that there were a number of Jewish intellectuals in Europe and America — including deputies, senators and ministers — who opposed the Zionist idea (and still continue to do so), and who opposed the usurpation of Palestine in order to establish the State of Israel, considering that Zionism is responsible for the hatred of the Jews which exists in the hearts of Muslims and Arabs. But, alas, their numbers are small and their voices are lost without an echo.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion we would say that the only pretext of the Zionists to justify the occupation of Palestine, the usurpation of the rights of the inhabitants and the establishment of the State of Israel is as follows:

The Torah (which as we have shown they wrote themselves) says that Jehovah promised to give Abraham and his posterity the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. Since the Jews are the descendants and posterity of Abraham they have the right to demand the fulfilment of this promise. And since it is written in the Torah that Jehovah ordered the 'children of Israel' to exterminate the Canaanites — men, women, children and old people — and to set fire to their towns and all that was in them, a military conquest of the 'Promised Land' would still appear to conform with the words of the Holy Book...

One may, nevertheless, wonder whether atrocities like this, which were normal procedure in antiquity, can be perpetuated today in the name of a Jehovah who bears hardly any resemblance to the Universal God worshipped by Moses. And from what we know of the composition of the Torah, the interpretations and moral tales which had a specific aim — to bolster up a people in exile and under trial — have no validity as far as territorial claims are concerned and have no historical or religious justification.

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Abraham: An Arab Semite prophet, born according to accepted tradition, in Ur in Mesopotamia; he went to Harran on the Euphrates from where he went to Egypt and subsequently to Palestine. He is regarded as being one of the first to have believed in and preached the belief in One God. He lived in the 19th century B.C.

Akhenaton: Pharaoh of Egypt, famous for his belief in One God. He lived in the 14th century B.C.

Akkadians: The first Arab Semite tribe to have migrated to the Euphrates. The Akkadians established a State, with a capital called Akkad, next door to that of the Sumerians.

Amalekites: The name given to the ancient Arab tribes who lived in the area extending from the Egyptian frontier through Sinai and into Palestine.

Amoreans: An Arab Semite tribe which emigrated from the Arabian Peninsular to the Fertile Crescent.

Anbar: An old town in Iraq on the left bank of the Euphrates. It was a place of refuge for the Jews taken away into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. After the Roman persecution in Palestine, the Jews took refuge there.

Aramaeans: An Arab Semite people who were one of the first to have gone from the Arabian Peninsular to the Fertile Crescent around 3000 B.C.

The Ark of the Covenant: A symbol of Jehovah. Jewish tradition says that it was a kind of wooden chest covered in gold and containing the two tablets on which the Law of Moses was engraved. Its fate is unknown.

Assyrians: Arab Semite people who migrated from the Arabian Peninsular and founded a great empire in the north of Mesopotamia, with the capital first at Assur and later at Nineveh.

Babylon: The Babylonian capital. It is situated on the Euphrates near Hilla.

Babylonians: The founders of the first Babylonian empire, the most famous of whose kings was Hammurabi, the instigator of the Law which is called after him. The second Babylonian empire was founded by the Chaldeans.

Byblos (Joubeil): A Phoenician town on the Mediterranean, north of Beirut.

Canaanites: Cousins of the Jebusites, the builders of Jerusalem; they were one of the first migrants from the Arabian Peninsular to Palestine where they built a number of towns and established the first Arab Semite civilisation.

Chaldeans: Arab Semites who migrated from the Arabian Peninsular. They were the founders of the second Babylonian empire after that of Hammurabi.

Chekem: The ancient Greek name for the modern town of Nablus.

David: The king who succeeded Saul as king of Jerusalem in the 10th century B.C.

El: The name of the One God in whom Abraham believed. The name appears in ancient inscriptions which go back to a period before that of Moses. It is the singular of the Canaanite word 'Elohim'.

Gaza: One of the five Palestinian coastal towns on the Mediterranean. It is one of the oldest towns in the world, and its original inhabitants were Canaanites.

Gazer (Jazer): An old Canaanite town to the north-west of Jerusalem, today in ruins with the name of 'Tel Jazer', and about 35 kms. from Jerusalem.

Gihon: An old and important Canaanite town to the north of Jerusalem of which only the ruins are left; it is also the name of a spring on the east of Jerusalem.

Hammurabi: The founder of the first Babylonian empire and author of the famous Code which bears his name. He ruled in Babylon in the 18th century B.C.

Harran: An ancient Canaanite town situated in Turkey. In antiquity it was a town in Mesopotamia where Abraham lived and in which the children of Israel were born.

Hyksos: Arab Semite shepherds who migrated from the Arabian Peninsular to Sinai and subsequently to Egypt (from where they were expelled at a later date).

Israel: The name given to Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham. The Jews took over his name without any plausible historical reason.

Jaffa: One of the oldest Canaanite towns in Palestine; situated on the Mediterranean coast it was Jerusalem's main trading port.

Jebusites: The oldest migrants from the Arabian Peninsular to the western part of the Fertile Crescent; they settled in Palestine where they built Jerusalem in the time of Melchisedec who was famous for his austerity, his piety and his munificence.

Jericho: A Canaanite town considered by archaeologists to be the oldest town in Palestine, and by some to be the oldest inhabited town in the world.

Joseph: The son of Jacob whose story is told in the Torah and the Koran.

Judah: The son of Jacob and Leah; in order to save Joseph from death he suggested to his brothers that they should sell him; he gave his name to the kingdom of Jerusalem from which the Jews have taken their own name.

Levites: Jewish priests, descendants of Levi the son of Israel, grandson of Abraham.

Majeddo: An old Canaanite town whose history goes back to the 15th century B.C.

Mari: The capital of the Amorites, situated on the right bank of the Euphrates near the town of Abou-Kamal.

Nabateans: Arabs who migrated rather later towards the western

part of the Fertile Crescent; they took Petra as their capital. This town was also used by the Idumaeans as their capital.

Nebuchadnezzar: The most famous Chaldean king of the second Babylonian empire. In the 6th century B.C. he invaded the kingdom of Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and took the Jews away into captivity in Babylon.

Phoenicians: A Canaanite people who settled along the Lebanese coast and whose towns are considered to have been Byblos, Beirut, Tyre and Sidon. They had trading posts on the African coast and founded Carthage.

Psalms: A book attributed to David; it contains hymns and songs in praise of God.

Samaria: An old Canaanite town near Nablus. It was conquered by the Assyrians who expelled the Jews and replaced them by other deported peoples.

Sanhedrin: The highest Jewish religious assembly; the most important Sanhedrin was that of Jerusalem.

Saul: A king of Israel appointed by the Judges in order to rule according to the law of Jehovah.

Solomon: The son of king David who ruled in Jerusalem after his father and built the Temple.

Talmud: The second Jewish holy book. It was written during the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.

Tel-Aviv: An old Babylonian name describing a locality in the south of Mesopotamia where those Jews lived who had not returned to Palestine after the Exile. Modern Tel-Aviv has been given its name in memory of the former.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

The 1917 Balfour Declaration

On November 2nd 1917 Great Britain made the policy decision, through the 'Balfour Declaration', to support the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The declaration took the form of a letter from Sir Arthur Balfour, then Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, to Lord Rothschild the most eminent of the English Jews, saying*:

"I have great pleasure in advising you of the following declaration by His Majesty's government in support of Zionist Jewish aspirations. This declaration has been submitted to the Cabinet and received its approval:

'His Majesty's government takes a favourable view of the establishment of a national home in Palestine for the Jewish people and will give full support to the realisation of this project but on the full understanding that nothing be done which will prejudice the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine or to the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country.'

"I would be grateful if you would inform the Jewish World Congress of this declaration."

Great Britain's policy declaration had already received the American President's approval before its publication. It was officially approved by the French and Italian governments in February and May 1918.**

* Translated from the Arab text.

** Pierre Renouvin: 'The European Crisis and First World War.'

APPENDIX II

A memorandum from Sir Edwin Montagu, dated August 23rd 1919, opposing Zionism and the Balfour Declaration

This memorandum is a complete analysis of the political and imperialist objectives of Zionism and of the Balfour Declaration. It comes from the pen of a British Minister, Sir Edwin Montagu who was himself a Jew. The memorandum is entitled 'The anti-Semitism of the present British government'. As an official British Cabinet document it represents the opposition of many Jews to the Balfour Declaration.

In view of its historical importance we are setting out here some extracts*:

"When I gave my note the heading 'The anti-Semitism of the present British government', it was not with hostile intent nor the wish to start a quarrel with my colleagues who profess anti-Semitic ideas... I simply want to point out what I believe to be the truth, namely, that the government's policy leads directly to anti-Semitism and will be the starting point for the unleashing of anti-Semitism in every country in the world. My opinion has been reinforced by the letter from Sir Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild, a copy of which I received yesterday.

"As the only Jewish minister in the government, I think that it is right that I should take this opportunity to put to my colleagues an opinion which I hold strongly.

"I firmly believe that this war has definitely put an end to internationalism and reopened the way to the rebirth of that

* Translated from the Arab text.

nationalist sentiment which had been getting weaker... All the politicians in the world agree that the partition of territory after the war should be on the basis of nationality...

"Yet at this very moment, the government is proposing to create a new nation with a new homeland in Palestine. It is clear that this nation will be made up of Russian, English, Rumanian and other Jews.

"It has always seemed to me that Zionism is a political doctrine which no true citizen of the United Kingdom can support. The English Jew who turns his eyes towards the Mount of Olives and who wants to shake the dust of England off his feet to go and farm in Palestine does not deserve to be treated as a British subject.

"I have always believed that those who supported this doctrine did so because they were driven to it by the restrictions on their liberty which they endured in Russia. But now that Russia has granted the Jews their rights to full civil liberty, it becomes completely incomprehensible that the British government should choose this moment to recognise Zionism officially and that the reorganisation of Palestine should be carried out on the basis of the creation on its territory of a national home for the Jewish people. I do not fully understand the purpose of all this... although I can conclude that it will mean that the Muslims and Christians must move out to make way for the Jews who will be in a privileged position and attached to Palestine by the same links as those which tie the English to England and the French to France; and this means, furthermore, that the Jews, like the Turks, will be treated as foreigners in every other country but Palestine.

"I would like to emphasise here the following four points:

"1. There is no such thing as a Jewish nation. An example is my own family who have lived here for several centuries without any links with a Jewish family in any other country and having no opinion or aspiration in common apart from belonging, to a greater or lesser extent, to the same religion. Just as one cannot say that an English and a French Christian are of the same

nation and race, so one cannot say it either about an English Jew and one from the Maghreb.

"2. If the Jews are told that Palestine is their national home, every country will try to get rid of its Jewish citizens. This will mean the arrival of a great number of them in Palestine, who will drive out the local inhabitants and take over the best areas. Since they will be coming from all over the world they will be speaking many languages and will have to use interpreters to communicate with each other.

"The way of life of British Jews, their goals and aspirations and the role which they have played in our public life and institutions, gives them the right to be regarded as Jewish Britons rather than British Jews. I would be inclined to deprive every Zionist of his civil rights and would even go as far as to ban the Zionist World Organisation as being illegal and prejudicial to English interests...

"3. I do not accept that the Palestine of today should be given to the Jews nor that it is the most appropriate place for them to live... The ten commandments were given to the Jews in Sinai... Even while conceding that Palestine played an important part in Jewish history, I must also recognise that it was similar for modern Islamic history. And after the diaspora it played the most important role of all in the history of Christianity. Even though the Jewish Temple is in Palestine, the Sermon on the Mount and Christ's crucifixion also took place there. And if my memory serves me well, the total number of Jews in the world is three times greater than can be accomodated in Palestine even if all the present inhabitants were to be driven out. This means that only a third of the total number of Jews could return there. So what happens to the rest?...

"As English Jews we attend the public schools and universities, and, more so than in the past, play our part in politics, the army and civilian life. And I am happy to see that the fanatical opposition to mixed marriages has begun to abate... But if a national home is given to the Jews, the motivation to deprive us of our rights as British citizens will undoubtedly become stronger. Then every citizen will have to make one of two choices: to go to

Palestine to live with other Jews who are strangers, or to continue to live as an unwanted guest in the country to which he thought he belonged.

"I ought not to be surprised if the government should have recourse to this solution after its decision to create a Jewish regiment in our army. I am waiting to hear that my brother, wounded in the navy, or my nephew in the Guards have been compelled by public opinion, or because of an army reorganisation, to become officers in a regiment composed, in theory, of those who do not even understand the English language which is their own. The creation of a Jewish regiment makes the position of Jews in other regiments untenable and is the imposition of a nationality on people who have nothing in common."

There is no doubt that this Jewish Minister's note wanted firstly to point out the prejudicial effect on world Jewry of the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. But there is also no doubt that this note confirms the fact that the Jews are not a nation which can have a nationality; that any attempt to create a Jewish nationality would always fail; and that the consequences of the British decision to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine could only be damaging both to the Jews and to Great Britain.

We know, however, that despite the criticism and opposition of the Jews to the creation of a national home in Palestine, the Balfour Declaration was promulgated without either the agreement or knowledge of the Arabs. When the Arabs did protest to the British government they were assured that the Balfour Declaration would not affect their civil or religious rights nor their political liberty and that the return of the Jews was only receiving government support on the condition that it accorded with the political and economic liberties of the people who lived there... *

*Henri Cattan: 'Law and Justice in Palestine', pp. 11, 12 and 14.

APPENDIX III

The Instrument for the Palestine Mandate

The draft of this instrument had been voted by the League of Nations on July 6th 1921, approved on July 24th 1922 and implemented on September 29th 1923. It had been drawn up by English and American Zionist experts together with various Zionist commissions, and was then presented to the British Government.

The Instrument confirms that the Mandatory country is responsible for the implementation of the Declaration of November 1917 by His Majesty's government, and approved by other countries, establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine (preamble). Great Britain implemented the policy so effectively that between 1917 and 1948 at the end of the Mandate, the number of Jews in Palestine increased from 50,000 to 650,000.

In the same document, it is recognised that there is a historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine and a list of reasons, justifying the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine is included (preamble).

The same preamble makes the Mandatory authority responsible for carrying out the promise given in November 1917 by His Majesty's government.

Articles 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 22 and 23 are concerned with the recognition of Jewish rights in Palestine, the facilitation of Jewish emigration and the sponsorship of their settlement and the obtention of Palestinian nationality. Article 22 makes Hebrew the official language; article 4 makes the Jewish Agency a public

body for providing the Administration with advice and assistance on those economic and social matters connected with the founding of the national home and the interests of the Jewish people. Article 4 also gives it the legal right to act as an Agency and to obtain assistance from any source which would consolidate the creation of a Jewish national home. It was by these means that the Zionists were able to provide a legal coverage in advance for everything which they planned to do for reinforcing the Jewish presence in Palestine.

APPENDIX IV

The Partition Plan for Palestine and the Status of Jerusalem

The General Assembly of the United Nations passed Resolution 181 (II) on November 29th 1947 as the decision to divide Palestine into two independent States, Arab and Jewish, and to set up a special international regime for the city of Jerusalem.

On the recommendation of the United Kingdom as the Mandatory Authority, the resolution was passed by 33 votes to 13 with 10 abstentions, including the United Kingdom, at the General Assembly's second session. The resolution was in three parts: the first was the partition plan, the economic union, the Palestinian Constitution and its independent government. It stipulated that the mandatory power should come to an end and should evacuate Palestinian territory as soon as possible but in any event, not later than August 1st 1948, providing that the evacuation of Jewish territory, which would include a seaport and hinterland large enough to support a major influx of immigrants, would take place not later than February 1st 1948.*

The proposed Constitution guaranteed civil rights and those of the minorities; it obliged the two States to take over the financial commitments contracted in the name of Palestine by the mandatory power during the period of the Mandate. The resolution's second part specified the boundaries of the Arab and Jewish States, detailed in Appendix I with a map based upon the 1946 Palestine Survey.

*Cf. Resolution 181 (II), The U.N. General Assembly.

The third part was concerned with the international control of Jerusalem by the United Nations through a Protectorate Council which would exercise the administrative authority on their behalf. It defined the city boundaries and included, in addition to the Jerusalem municipality, the neighbouring villages and territory; these are detailed in a map attached to Appendix II. It stipulated that Arabic and Hebrew would be the city's two official languages.

APPENDIX V

The Independence Act, or Declaration on the creation of the State of Israel

(translated from the Arab text)

"It was in the land of Israel that the Jewish people developed, where it found its spiritual, religious and political entity, where it lived an independent political life, where it produced those treasures of its national, humanistic culture and where it gave the everlasting Book of books to the whole world (*sic*).

"After the forced expulsion from its land, the people remained faithful in all the areas of the diaspora and never ceased to pray and hope for a return to their land and the exercise of their political freedom.

"It is because of this traditional and historical link that the Jews have always tried to return to the homeland of their ancestors. In recent times they have returned in great number with their advance guards and their defenders who had come here in dangerous conditions. They have revived it, revived the Hebraic language, founded settlements, created a colonial society which manages its own economy and cultural affairs, which loves peace, which is able to defend itself, which brings the benefits of progress to the inhabitants of the region and which aspires to political independence.

"It was in 1897, in response to the call by Theodore Herzl, the originator of the dream of a Jewish State, that the Zionist Congress was held and declared that the Jewish people had the right to restore its national identity on its own land (*sic*).

"This right has been recognised by the Balfour Declaration. It has been ratified by the Mandate of the League of Nations. Confirmation, therefore of the link between the Jewish people and the land of Israel and their right to restore their nation's homeland has been given international authority.

"The catastrophe which fell upon the Jewish people in recent years and claimed millions of victims in Europe confirms the need to find a solution for the problem of this people without a country and without independence, which would enable them to rebuild a Jewish State in the land of Israel; a State which will open its doors to all Jews and ensure that this people will be treated as a nation with the same rights as all the others.

"The survivors of the terrible Nazi holocaust in Europe as well as Jews from other countries are constantly migrating to the land of Israel; in spite of all the difficulties, all the obstacles and all the dangers they are not giving up their right to a normal life and honest work in the land of their people.

"The Hebrew citizens of every country paid their full price during the struggle between those on the side of peace and freedom and the Nazi forces of evil. And it is at the price of their blood and war effort that they deserve to take their place amongst the countries which have founded the United Nations Organisation.

"On November 29th 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution for the creation of a Jewish State in the land of Israel and invited the people of Ertz Israel to take the appropriate steps themselves to implement the resolution. The recognition by the United Nations of this right of the Jewish people to create a State is irrevocable.

"It is the natural right of the Jewish people, like all other independent peoples, to live within their own sovereign State.

"In consequence of which, we, members of the People's Assembly and representatives of the Hebrew colonisation and Zionist movement, are meeting in Ertz Israel on this last day of the British Mandate, and we declare, in conformity with our natural and historical right and by virtue of the resolution of the

General Assembly of the United Nations, that we are founding a State in Ertz Israel.

"We decide that from the moment when the British Mandate comes to an end this evening of Friday May 15th 1948 and until such time as the elected government of the State is created in accordance with the law which will be promulgated by Congress, not later than September 1st 1948, it is the People's Assembly, acting as the Council of State, which will exercise the interim executive authority and manage the nation's affairs as the interim government of the Jewish State which will be known as Israel.

"The State of Israel will be open to Jewish immigration and for the return from the diaspora. It will develop the country in the interests of all its inhabitants. It will be based upon respect for freedom, justice and peace. It will take its guidance from the inspiration of the prophets of Israel. It will establish complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens without distinction of religion, origin of race. It will guarantee freedom of religion and education. It will protect the Holy Places of all religions and will respect the principles of the United Nations' Charter.

"The State of Israel will be ready to cooperate with the United Nations Organisation and its representatives in order to implement the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 29th 1947. It will try to achieve the economic unity of the whole land of Israel.

"We ask the United Nations to give their assistance to the Jewish people in the creation of their State and for the admission of the State of Israel to the community of nations.

"In spite of the bloody aggression of which we have been the victims for several months, we appeal to the children of the Arab people who are living in the State of Israel to make peace and join with us in building the State of Israel on the basis of complete and equal citizenship and the appropriate representation in all the interim and permanent State institutions.

"We extend the hand of peace and good neighbourliness to all the nations around us. We ask for their collaboration and mutual

assistance with the Hebrew people in their independent State. And the State of Israel is completely ready to participate in a common effort to enhance the progress of the whole of the Middle East.

"We call on all the Jewish people throughout the diaspora to migrate and join the colonisers and to stand at their side in the great struggle to realise the dream of generations for the liberation of Israel.

"With our faith in Israel we set our hand in witness of this Declaration made by the provisional Council of State on the soil of our homeland in the town of Tel-Aviv, dated this evening of Friday, May 15th 1948."

(Signed) David Ben Gurion
and twenty-eight other signatories.

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This book is not a treatise on the scriptures nor is it a theological refutation. Supported by a considerable weight of historical and archaeological evidence it is an approach to the controversial problem of the occupation of a territory on legal and prerogative grounds of which the legality can — and should — be questioned.

Although Ahmad Soussé's study touches upon political subjects also, it is because the problem has, for many years, been turned into a political one. In order to justify the occupation of Palestinian territory and the despoiling of its inhabitants the Zionists have used arguments taken from dubious sources and made assertions which were put forward — and accepted — as being absolute truths, whereas they are contradicted by what we have learned today from archaeology, ethnography, philology, epigraphy, paleography and the other disciplines which have been used to study the seven thousand years old history of the regions considered to have been the cradle of mankind.

The well known author Arthur Koestler, a Jew and supporter of the theories on Israel, concludes, in his book "The Thirteenth Tribe" on the kingdom of the Khazars, that the majority of the Jewish population is not of Palestinian but of Caucasian origin. The essential point is that the Jewish migrations did not leave the Mediterranean to move eastwards, passing through France and Germany, and then subsequently returning westwards. They moved continuously towards the west, from the Caucasus towards the Ukraine, thence towards Poland and from there towards Central Europe.